

Featured Guest Interviews

Hermann Bruns (@wildflightfarm, wildflightfarm.ca)

Hermann Bruns: [00:00:27] My name is Herman Bruns and my wife and I started farming about, 25, just over 25 years ago. And, yeah, we, we farm in the north Oakenoggen in British cologne. And, we have, a 20 acre farm and we rent a little bit of extra line so that we can, do some more rotations, bigger rotations between vegetables and, some agreement years.

And, yeah, we've we grow a huge variety of market vegetables. We do two farmer's markets a week, and we also do, deliveries to a home, organic home box delivery company. And, that pretty much uses up most of our produce. we have a staff now of 12 people to help us run the farm and, and it keeps us, yeah, that keeps us all pretty busy

Diego Footer: [00:01:18] for 25 years in the vegetable space.

There's new ways to sell now, compared to what there was back then, but what hasn't changed about selling vegetables?

Hermann Bruns: [00:01:32] it's still a lot of hard work. it's, and it's, there's a lot of unpredictability about what is going to sell and what it's not going to sell. just this week we were sitting on some fabulous, beautiful lettuce heads, but, you can't sell them one way or the other. So it's just, suddenly everyone's got them, like all the farmers have them.

It's just when one, a good year for growing lettuce. So sitting on a surplus, those kinds of things are definitely not going to go away. You're still gonna have that. Sometimes you'll be short. Sometimes she'll have way too much. then there's the weather and all that sort of stuff just to production, but, and also affects marketing as well.

so I, those things are the same, Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:02:11] Do you think over the past 25 plus years, Whittled down what you think customers want when they're buying for a small scale farmer versus going to a grocery store. And lettuce is one example there. Hey, we have beautiful heads, but other people might have it too.

But if you take out the examples like that, do you think that at this point, like you've hacked or figured out what customers want when it comes to buying vegetables from local farmers?

Hermann Bruns: [00:02:41] the way I look at it is it's a moving target just when you think you might have it figured out the target moves. And we're constantly. Adjusting to this every week. we're looking at, we're looking at our records of what we sold last year at the same time enabled to be able to predict whether there's a trend.

So sometimes we see these trends, right? Particularly let's take lettuce, for example, that, earlier in just two or three weeks earlier, we were selling a lot of lettuce, and we never had it. And it was because we were on the market earlier than some of the other growers in some of our markets now they're coming on.

So we can predict that trend a little bit. now there are always variations each year, but, and there's then also changes where people start saying, no, I, I'm not so keen on that anymore. I want to eat more Oko or I want more, spinach or whatever it is. And so things shift.

So we keep pretty close records of exactly what we sell every market. We look back to previous years, what did we sell at this market at this day on this date? And then we look at what we sold last week and we make an educated guess in, in there to try to look at, what should we take and harvest, and take to the market to this week.

but then sometimes, this just this week we predicted that we were going to sell a hundred head or a hundred pulabi and, I think we got, we only sold half of them and I thought, whoa, how did that happen? Like, how could our prediction be off of that by that much? It's just one of these real weird anomalies that just suddenly, for some reason they didn't look quite right or whatever.

It's just, I don't know. There's so many variables there. It's hard to figure out. Why did that just happen? It's not a big deal. You just chop the tops off and you can sell them again the next week. So no problem. And what have you removed?

Diego Footer: [00:04:30] the vegetables from the equation is selling the same now as it was like now I think there's a big emphasis on organic chemical, free local, food security.

Now, after coming out of COVID-19, when you started selling, do you think that those I'll call them the intangibles that represent local food, where they. The same. Were they close or have those evolved over time?

Hermann Bruns: [00:05:03] I think, it's definitely changed. Like when we started farmers markets were in our area, we're in all of that, we're just developing as well.

and a lot of customers didn't really, understand the concept of organic. Certainly we've been certified at getting from the day we started. and so we had a lot of, we spend a lot of time talking about that in the early years. now we don't talk about that so much. I think most people understand that and they mostly, I think a lot of people think that most, vendors at farmer's markets are organic and for the most part they're fairly close, but, there's definitely some that aren't, and.

In terms of, just local, definitely that's, something that wasn't really being discussed at all back in the day, when we first started, and that's increasingly, something that people are interested in knowing where their food is coming from and how it's being produced. and of course during the pandemic, it was, there was a real intense, demand for local is like for yeah.

Food produced within our region. And, and there was food security concerns, for sure. I think that's dying down now. Again, I think people are just going back to, okay, there's, there's no issue anymore. The grocery stores have all the stuff that we're looking for as well, and the farmer's markets are pretty active.

so it's always changing. It's one of these things that seems to be changing all the time.

Diego Footer: [00:06:28] Having that track record selling at farmer's markets for new farmers, getting into the game now, looking at all the models that you can sell wholesale CSA online

farmer's market. What are your thoughts on farmer's markets as a sales model for smaller farms?

Hermann Bruns: [00:06:49] I think farmer's markets are a great place to start for sure. Take much to get into them, and you'll really, you should do your research in your area as well as to what farmer's markets are doing well. And, there's some that just are a waste of time. And, we went to quite a few before we settled on a few that one or two that we liked or, felt we're a good fit for our, what we had.

so it's, and then there are, of course, yeah, it can be tough to, there are frustrations with farmer's markets, of course, because if it's a bad weather day and you get, you just happen to have the market on a downpour day, you could be bringing, half your stuff back and you put all that effort into producing it and packing it.

and then, we ended up having to, give it away or compost it or whatever, and that can be really distressed. but the nice thing is that you do get that connection with customers, that real direct connection. and you do have a way of, seeing what's going on. What do they want, what do they, what are they looking for?

And you've got multiple customers, not just, a few, if you're a whole it's selling wholesale and you've only got one or two, if those people don't decide not to order for some reason, or somebody offers them something cheaper, boy, that can be really big change in a short time. Whereas with farmer's markets, at least you're probably looking at 1, 2, 300 customers coming by and they're all making decisions.

And so it averages out a little bit. And if you're going to sell several markets that helps too, because sometimes, something will really sell well in one market, but won't sell so well in another for, because maybe there's another vendor that has the same thing or the people are different or whatever.

Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:08:31] What about advice in terms of selling at markets and succeeding at markets? If you go that route. What if, what tips would you have for somebody new?

Hermann Bruns: [00:08:45] I think our strategy has been, we've been going to smaller, rural markets. we've avoided some of the bigger city markets in our area. Doesn't have a lot of really big cities. Although some farmers actually go to Vancouver, which is a really big city, of course. but that's, it's a six hour drive from here and I'm thinking, I don't really want to do that.

and so w and often we were one of very few vegetable vendors. And so my, my thinking always. Let's make sure we do a really wide diversity of, try to grow everything we possibly can and try to provide a really great selection and the better that you can do that job of always having the Y the broadest possible selection, the better you're likely to capture, market share and get those customers thinking, oh yeah, this is a reliable source of vegetables. You can't just show up every now and then when you feel like it's in, in, in all the time that we've been going to markets, we've never missed a market. There's no way we're missing a market ever.

And we don't care if it's snowing. The only time, that we could possibly miss a market is that if the road's closed because of a snow storm or something like that, and we've had that happen

and all we've done is just postponed it for a couple of days and said, okay, we're going to be there. The markets I was supposed to be on Saturday, but we'll be there on Monday.

Cause you know, people want, you want to be able to make sure that they can rely on you to have these items when they want them and when they expect them. And I think that's been a, that are real focus and always looking out. So yeah. Not being satisfied with selling out of something. it's always nice to sell out of something, but it's also not a good thing because that means some customers went home without getting what they want it.

So if we sell out of spinach too early, then I'm thinking of, okay, we should make a note of trying to grow a little bit more spinach at this time a year to try to adjust the amount so that we can get more. I always want to bring a little bit of something of everything back, just so that we're making sure we're saturating the market.

And our customers are going home happy with what they were able to get.

Diego Footer: [00:10:51] Great tips and you get that consistency. Get the customers coming back, build that strong kind of steady customer base. It'll support you over time. you probably would have had some customers the whole time. You've been farming there.

Suck around. Oh

Hermann Bruns: [00:11:05] yeah. We've actually had a. W we're almost on our third generation of some customers where we have three generations shopping at our market of the same family, which is really cool.

Diego Footer: [00:11:16] That is really cool to just see that and see the

Hermann Bruns: [00:11:19] grandparents. You've got the parents and now you got, the kids are just having their own kids or just starting their own family.

And they're coming by the market and buying stuff. That's really cool. Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:11:30] So you have the personal connection, which is amazing. And it puts a face to doing business. It's the reward for all the hard work that's been done in the field and having those conversations, seeing the happy buyer leave, but some farmers, like you said, six hour drives down to Vancouver.

There's a downside to farmer's market. One is the commute, getting up early on those days, long days, what are some of the negatives to farmer's markets for you? If somebody is going there.

Hermann Bruns: [00:11:55] yeah. often farmer's markets, the good ones are on Saturday. So it means you usually, it's chopping a day out of your weekend if you want to have a weekend.

and, yeah, it's usually early morning mark, early morning starts for sure. and yeah, like I said earlier, you can have just bad weather days. You're really exposed to the weather. so sometimes some markets can be very sensitive to that and others, are better for that. it can, you can definitely have that variable is in there, whereas at the store, if you were, if we've sometimes thought, wouldn't it be nice to have our own store and we wouldn't be in the weather.

we'd be available more to our customers. if they don't buy it one day, they might buy it the next. Whereas with the farmer's market, you get like a, a four hour window. Where you've gotta be able to have, people have to feel like coming to the market, it's a narrow window once a week, Or twice a week, if you go to a couple of markets, it's a narrow window. And if that window happens to be, a real downpour, you're gonna, you're going to be not very happy with what you sell. So there's, that's definitely, something about farmer's markets that are, but on the other hand also, there's not a lot of it, you can just bring what you got.

it doesn't, it's not that you have to prepare a lot of things. other than obviously you have to grow the product and get it ready for market. But, as soon as you get into, we'll talk later about the online stores and managing inventory. That's something that's like a whole nother level of stuff that you have to deal with.

Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:13:26] and using that as a bit of a transition. What was the initial catalyst that got you thinking to diversify your sales stream beyond farmer's markets and some of the other, physical models that you had in place? Why did you consider going online?

Hermann Bruns: [00:13:43] there's sort of two parts of that answer.

One is we, we, like I said earlier, we do sell to a couple of companies that, do a home, organic home box delivery, business. And, we were thinking it would, we were hoping that we would maybe get a few more of those kinds of customers and we thought it'd be good to have our products on a, on an online platform.

We used to do it by fax where we'd fax them a list of what we have. But if you fax the same list to three different customers, Then if one customer buys all of it, the other ones are going to get shorted or it's really hard to manage. Oh, that's now just sold out. So that's the part that I was really keen on at first is doing that.

So I thought, if we could find a platform where we could just put all those items on the platform, and then as soon as one customer buys, let's say you've got 200 bags of spinach that you've got on offer. One customer buys 150 of them. That means the next person that looks at it will only see 50.

And that was a really important thing because there was, I needed to inventory. You control on that. And then we wouldn't get that problem where we're selling out. like we're shorting other customers on things that had already been purchased. So that was that's how we got into it a few years ago, but only on our, we didn't use it at our market site at all.

We only used it. For those, wholesale customers. And, yeah, we were really, we didn't put any pictures on or anything. Like it was just as a way of managing inventory then of course, let me pause you

Diego Footer: [00:15:12] there. So if we look at just that, how did having an online platform help solve some of those wholesale problems?

Hermann Bruns: [00:15:23] the main thing being that it was just a little bit easier for, a customer, a wholesale customer to go on and see what we had available at any point in time.

and it would be what we actually had available, right. It wouldn't be a list from today. That was a list of everything we had.

And in the meantime, we've had five other customers buy something. so this would be a list of what was real time lists. That was my thinking on it. The customers on the whole seem to adapt to that pretty well. It was, we actually ended up not getting a lot more also customers. So we might've been able to get away without even using the store, the online version.

But at that point I'd started, the transition of learning, how to put things online and learning how to manage the inventory and stuff like that, that I just decided to carry on with it. I didn't want to go back to the facts. even though some days I thought this would be a lot simpler, I could just quickly send out in fact, but I know that I would have to send out another fax with an update, several hours later when the first few orders came in.

yeah. I think that's really what we wanted to do with it and it worked pretty well for that. Yeah. And the other thing too, is we could, offer a multiple pack sizes, for example, quite easily, like on, let's say on spinach, we could offer like half a dozen different pack sizes. No problem.

All coming off the same inventory, which was really cool. so that way, if we knew we had a hundred pounds of spinach and some people were buying it in three pound boxes and other ones were buying it in Aidan's bags, w we wouldn't overshoot the mark, on, we would still be limited to a hundred.

Diego Footer: [00:16:57] Yeah, it seems to me like, just hearing that the first time you don't have to resend that fax or make that call or send that email saying yeah. That thing you wanted to, somebody just already bought it all, that pays for it or it makes it all worth it right there, because you do have that real-time inventory.

Hermann Bruns: [00:17:13] Yeah. Yeah. that was for me, the really important part in it. it worked well. Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:17:20] so given that, that was up and working on that side, what was the catalyst to move it to the retail side of things?

Hermann Bruns: [00:17:29] Yeah. we had been experimenting a little bit with possibly offering some bulk items.

we used to, we send a newsletter to our, our customers, prior to every market. Telling them what's going on, what we've got, that kind of thing. and that's a real important communications tool we use to list on the, in, especially in the winter, we used to list lots of items on ball because we'd have lots of cabbage and lots of carrots, and we were buying apples from other farms and offering those as well.

And and then people were emailing in these orders and I thought, oh, this is getting to be a bit of a pain because we're starting to get quite a number of them. If you've only got 10 orders, okay, it's not bad. But if you start getting 1520, then you're doing it all by email and they're all different quantities and no sort of organized way of downloading it.

You have to enter it all into either a spreadsheet or on some kind of, an order sheet. And so we implemented, we thought, okay, we've got this online store. all we need to do is create

another catalog and. and it'll be just our bulk stuff. And so we were just doing that, LA in 2019 into 2020, and then of course COVID hit and we realized, oh, okay, we've got it online.

So we're going to just put everything on the online store. and we, because we were selling part of the reason for that too, is that, we have winter markets, we do markets year round. and so when COVID hit in the middle of March, we were doing bi-weekly markets and, and it was really intense at that point.

And, everyone was really fearful about it. And, we, our decision was. To go completely online only. And so we basically told our customers through our newsletter that the only way we were going to be bringing produce there was through an online order so that there was low contact and we were trying to get everyone to spread out so that they weren't all showing up.

at 10 o'clock in the morning, like it usually is at a farmer's market. You get these big lineups and everyone shows up at the same time. So we were able to get everyone to, start putting in online orders. They were really motivated at the time. And, and then we'd say to them, okay, if your name starts from, between a and H you come in the first half hour and the next people come in the next half hour.

and so that we could really spread them out. So we didn't get big crowds because that was the thinking of the time as we had to keep the contacts and the number, the numbers. And that's really, what was the main catalyst for bullshitting it? We had been thinking, maybe, some of our customers had already been asking us, can we buy other things through your online store, in addition to the bulk items?

And we were just contemplating, yeah, we should maybe do that. If we have time, we can start adding other things in. But then when that hit, we realized we had to do it from the space of, I think three days we put everything on and in, in from one week to the next, we went from having a market where people are coming to pick, buy their stuff at the market table to online orders only.

And that was like a crazy learning curve. But, that's how it happened.

Diego Footer: [00:20:26] What was some of the original hesitancy? Was it just, Hey, it's another thing to do already on an endless list of things to do.

Hermann Bruns: [00:20:34] Yeah, there's definitely, we just. we knew that before any, that there's a bit of work involved, for sure.

And we thought, how many people are going to want to do that? And do we want to go down that road? And there were some issues still with the platform that I wasn't, it was a little bit hesitant about, that I thought should be fixed before I went whole hog into it. And, and so I was just yeah, playing at the margins a little bit, testing it out and just getting to the point where, okay, now it looks like we could do this.

maybe we should start doing it and we'd quietly already started doing it for a few customers, but we hadn't actually promoted it. We had most of the items on there, but no pictures. and then we realized, okay, we got to get photos of everything up and, you really get serious about this and start spreading the link, promoting it widely.

And, that's what we ended up doing.

Diego Footer: [00:21:24] And when COVID forced you to go online, no market, normal market sales. What was that like as somebody who had sold that markets for so long, how was it just selling online?

Hermann Bruns: [00:21:40] it was all of the same customers. So in many ways we were just collectively with our customers trying to figure out how are we going to get our produce to you? Like the other option would be to just shut the market down, which we weren't keen on doing, obviously, because we had produce that we wanted to sell and we wanted to and from our customer's perspective, they were especially motivated to wanting to get more produce or, continue to get our produce.

So w we realized that we needed to do something to make it possible for us to continue to be able to get vegetables to these people. And so that's why we made that leap to do it that way. And. Yeah, our customers, definitely some of them struggled with it. there's certainly some people that, that are some of our, especially our older customers.

they'd never, some of them had never put in an online order before in their lives. And so suddenly here they were being forced into it. and for the most part, a lot of them were just really motivated and yeah, I was just super. Excited and proud to see some of these folks, the efforts that they went to figure it out.

and, there were glitchy things in their platform still. And, there was some things that were making it hard, but they were, we encourage them to phone us if there was a problem. And I was doing lots of tech support over the phone and, with different devices that would look different.

And yeah, it was just crazy at the time. But, it was really cool in some respects that we could make this move and actually in this crisis, figure out a way of being able to get you those vegetables and, that was exciting on the other hand. Yeah, it was, we had a lot of things to figure out how are we going to do this?

How are we going to take so many orders? How are we going to pack those? And, we went through a whole bunch of changes as we went along and trying to figure out faster and easier and more efficient ways of doing things. And yeah, our first go round was when I looked back at that.

And I think, holy, geez, I dunno how we did that doing it that way. Yeah. Now we have much better ways of doing it. Of course.

Diego Footer: [00:23:41] So w when the kinks got settled out and you had customers who are now familiar with the platform and you saw the packing distribution side of things, how was that, this concept of, I can sell online.

I can open the store for as much as I want during the week. I don't have just that four hour went on a Saturday. I'm not losing my Saturday. Is what were your, what was that like as a farmer, when you were connected to a couple markets and you had those limited windows now it's like optionality has just gone wide open here.

W what did you think about that?

Hermann Bruns: [00:24:21] Yeah, that definitely was, the, it just added a little bit more of an element to, to something that, you know, that we can offer a service, basically. we were offering the service of, okay, you can put in an order, anytime you want, you can be lying in your bed and put it in on your phone.

so that was a convenience factor for sure. And if from at the time, a safety factor that people wouldn't have to be standing in crowded lineups to do it. And for some customers, we had some customers earlier, already, like I'd mentioned that, that were saying to us, I can't make it to the market at the, for that four or five hour window.

would it be possible for me to put in an order? And then I could just send a friend or something to pick it up or something like that. And so that suddenly made it possible for people that, wanted to be able to plan or couldn't make it to the market for whatever reason, but still wanted to buy from us.

They could go on to the store anytime and putting in an order and then they could figure out how they're going to get it. Like just by sending a friend or, they, we ha we offered three different pickup locations, so they could choose a different spot if they, if that was convenient. Yeah, I, but for the most part, I think overall it's the same customers.

The, I don't think we necessarily gained a lot of customers out of it. I think it was pretty much all for us, at least pretty much all the same people just ordering in a different, getting their vegetables in a different way. And for some, there was a convenience factor for sure that made it easier for them to just quickly come pick up their stuff.

It's all paid by each transfer already and they can just come and get it and go. Do you think

Diego Footer: [00:25:55] that you've seen customer sales online go up, if you compare the market sale to an online sale, I've heard some farmers say they do notice people buy more online. It's just, it's easier to click and buy the markets.

People can feel rush. W do you have any thought on that?

Hermann Bruns: [00:26:13] Yeah, I think that's definitely true. We've noticed that too. And I think it's selecting that the online store is selecting for customers that are more serious about getting their weekly vegetables. And they're not just tire kicking or, saying, oh, let's go to the market because it's something fun to do on a Saturday morning.

And if we buy something, we buy somebody, if not, no big deal. These are people that are saying, okay, I'm getting my weekly vegetables every week from this farm. and this way by being online and putting in an online order, they can, take a look in their fridge and see what they have.

And I think one of the, one of the situations at a farmer's market too, is that people are walking the length of your table. Like we have it set up so that people start at one end of our, our tables and wander and pick up a basket, a shopping basket, and walk along the edge of the table and put things in the basket as they're going along.

and I think sometimes you hit a physical limit of how much can go into that. And you're thinking, oh, that's gotta be enough. And we're and that might, that might be a \$40 purchase, if you were to sit at home and you're, looking at your fridge and trying to plan your week,

your weekly menus or whatever, do your weekly produce plan, you might come up with a different number and you have no there isn't that sort of physical cue to discourage you from buying enough for the whole week.

So this way they can say, okay, yeah, let's get one of this and why this, and then whatever it is, and that's going to be good for the week. Whereas otherwise they may go to the market and say, okay, I thought I had enough. Oh, I guess I got to go to the grocery store and buy some more because I ran out of lettuce and I should've got three instead of two or something like that.

And this way, they just buy three and it's in the box and it's ready to go. So definitely I've noticed that, our sales per customer increase, But, like I said, it's mostly the same customers there, but it's just selecting for those that are already, the ones that are serious about it and want to get all their produce.

And they just are doing a better job of it because they can do it in a while they're at home and thinking about right.

Diego Footer: [00:28:16] And one of the big decisions that people have once they make the decision to go online is when to leave this store open, how to do the delivery, how many drop points, what would be some advice you've had you mentioned early on, Hey, it was a mess and, but we got through it.

We figured it out. And you've refined the system over the past a year and a half. Now, what advice would you give to somebody in terms of here's what's worked for us in terms of when we open our store, here's how we've gone about deciding how many pickup locations to set when to set. To give people some guidance on, alright, where should I start?

Hermann Bruns: [00:28:59] Yeah. we had the benefit of already having our farmer's markets and those, we just converted those into pickup points in the early let's say March, April, may into June. That's where we were totally online, only online orders only. And then once we ran into the summer, farmer's markets started saying, okay, things, the whole COVID thing was settling down a little bit.

And so we were starting to do both we'd do the online store and anything that was. Or available, we bring to the market and set up a market table as well as handout. And that's what we continue to do today is that we run both models. so in terms of pickup locations, we just use our farmer's markets.

and we added a one for an on-farm pickup. So if people wanted to come by to the farm and pick it up, they could come there on a particular day. and then, yeah, then we ran into the problem right away is okay. We got one market on a Wednesday morning or Wednesday afternoon in one town and another market, on a Saturday morning in another town.

now do we want to do inventory for the whole week, which on our store at once, because then what would happen is that possibly if you were in something that was low inventory, that you didn't have a lot of, let's say, cherry tomatoes early in the year, None of them would go, they'd all get scooped up at the first market at the, for the first round of orders and market.

And so Saturday, Wednesday would get it all Saturday wouldn't get anything. so we decided, fairly soon that we didn't want to do it that way. So what we do is we do an inventory for the

seminar market. We opened the store. Usually now we open it on Friday afternoon. So they've got Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday to put in their order.

And then, on Wednesday morning, we close off that store. We change the inventory, putting a new inventory for our Saturday market and the people for the Saturday market have Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or just half of Friday. and so that's ultimately the way we came up with so that we could manage individual, like more the inventory, a little bit more specifically, for each market.

and that way we could divide things up and also we needed sometimes, when you look at what you might have on Monday, or even before, you're usually make a decision already on Friday the week before you think, okay, I'm going to have, X number of pints of cherry tomatoes, and then you don't, you ended up with a lot more or something like that.

maybe we could shift gears and we can just add more inventory to the Revelstoke market in any way. It just helped us keep it separate a little bit. And it worked better for us to that way then doing one inventory for the whole week. But, everyone's situation is going to be different.

That just was the way we decided to do it. And it, it works quite cleanly. And then it also helps us track how individual markets. Are still doing relative to, especially now that we're selling both the same time. So if we have, let's say a hundred bag of spinach, 50 get bought up by the store and then we take 50 to the market.

we already set, we have to harvest and pack all that spinach before we even know what the store ordered. And so the rest just goes to the farmer's market. and either sells or doesn't. yeah, that's how we decided to manage the inventory between the two markets.

And, it works fairly well, if you, sorry, one other thing, I just thought of it. Some things we were allowed to say, we could, we would sell at one market and wouldn't sell at another two. That was another thing that we did because either there were some rules, different differences that some markets wouldn't allow us to sell something that another market would allow us to sell.

Or, we didn't have something for the beginning of the week that we'd have it at the end of the week. So we just put it on to one market and we just harvest it once rather than harvesting it, trying to harvest it for both. So we can control what we're offering to each market that way as well, by having separate inventory for each one.

Diego Footer: [00:33:09] So visualizing how you might do this, from all your past year's data, you have a guesstimate of, okay. This week, we think we're going to sell this much of each product. Let's just call

Hermann Bruns: [00:33:19] that this particular

Diego Footer: [00:33:21] market at this market. So it's 10 units of X crop. So you at the beach, you're getting guess, and you're going to put, okay, we're going to have 10 units of that available online.

And if all 10 go online, then the farmer's market gets none essentially. Correct? Yep. I got it. Yeah. Got it.

Hermann Bruns: [00:33:40] Yeah. Yeah. And of course, what we'll be doing then is then next week, we'll say, oh, we didn't have a at the farmer's markets. If we have more, let's go out and harvest 20 units of that same item.

And, then we'll assume that 10 will be sold by the store and then we'll have 10 for the market. and then we'd see, did that work or not? And, keep refining it each week.

Diego Footer: [00:34:06] Blended model of farmer's markets and online store resulted in less waste. Are you able to sell more of each crop because you have, you're now having this inventory and then being able to push it online and then the rest goes to farmer's markets?

Hermann Bruns: [00:34:28] it, yeah, I think it maybe does marginally help with that because certainly you have, those customers that have ordered online are not going to make a last minute decision to order to buy their stuff somewhere else. So you've got a pretty good idea. Let's say for our Saturday, right? by Friday, w we, our store cutoff, is it Friday at 10:00 AM?

so we know, okay. of a hundred bags of spinach, 50 have already gone to the store and two orders. So those 50 are sold. Now I'm only gambling on the last 50. whereas if you go to a farmer's market straight you're gambling on the whole hundred, more or less, because, it's something where, you know, if the weather was really bad, then you know, all those people that bought that already paid for the 50 and had ordered that they're going to have to come pick up their order, regardless, they've already ordered it and paid for it, or they're going to be four.

And so they're gonna say, okay, whether it be damned, I'm going to go, whereas that same customer, if they hadn't ordered can say what the hell, I'll just buy it at the grocery store. It's too rainy out there. I'm not going out there. So that, that helps a little bit you're gambling on a little bit less because it's already pre-ordered so there's always, it's nice to know, okay, this chunk here is already sold.

Boom. We don't have to worry about that. Now we just need to worry about this piece over here. That's that retained the market, which is a smaller piece.

Diego Footer: [00:35:55] That's one thing that was what I was going to ask you. Is there a different mental feeling, just knowing that a big chunk of what you take to the market, like it's already sold and now you can focus on just selling the rest and in that way, I guess it makes it easier to like, if okay, spinach sold really well.

I don't have as much, but I'm long a bunch of tomatoes. Okay. I can really focus on pushing tomatoes instead of having to push spinach and tomatoes, because most of this manager's already sold.

Hermann Bruns: [00:36:23] Yeah. Yeah. You can definitely, those sorts of things that it gives you a bit more room on the market table.

If some things are sold out, you can just say, okay, we'll put two boxes of tomatoes up cause they don't have any spinach. before you'd have to have, at least at the beginning of the market, you'd have to have all of that out there until the spinach out there as well until it was just finished still.

So definitely, there's a little bit of that, that you can, those kinds of factors that you can, the variables that you can play with a little bit. and yeah, it does. It does, feel secure. I think, I to see more of itself through the store, just because it feels like a more secure feeling we're now getting back into the summer.

Again, it feels like we're, going back towards markets more and more of our customers are saying, ah, I'm not going to bother, I'll just get it at the market. So we're back to invest in 50%. I think, of what we're selling is going to the store. are there

Diego Footer: [00:37:16] ways you think you could incentivize online sales where.

If you order online, you get, a bonus this or that. Cause I can definitely see the advantage. Hey, if we sell ahead, like we know it's all we can, we harvest exactly that. there's a lot of, it

Hermann Bruns: [00:37:33] solves some problems. It does smell, it does solve from bonds, although it also generates some other ones.

in terms of not necessarily problem, problems and work particularly, you need to, you also have to put all that stuff on the store and it's a lot of work to do all that and maintain that, that maintain the story each week, that you wouldn't have at a farmer's market.

You'd just go out and harvest what you got and throw it on, throw it in your truck and away you go. but what gets interesting, especially. It's not so much of an issue now anymore. We're where we were, where we're at about 50%. Cause we usually have lots of excess, but it was tight early on when we were selling most things through the store, because then your inventory had to be your estimate of what you're going to have, has to be pretty accurate.

And if you're suddenly short and you've already sold it, then you're suddenly thinking, oh shoot. Now I don't know. So let's say you have a hundred heads of lettuce and you thought you'd have a hundred heads of lettuce you out there and you harvest them. and you only get 75. but you've already posted a hundred on the store on 95 assault.

so then suddenly you're going to have to figure out, okay, how do I give refunds to the 20 people that ordered it and that we don't have it. it actually makes it a little bit easier now because okay. If I go out. I only have a hundred heads of lettuce. 50 are probably going to be selling at the market and 50 at the stores.

So I've only get 75. I've still got 50 for the store and I just only have 25 for the market. So it doesn't create an issue and inventory issue right away. But other times it's a little bit tighter. And so you have to. React to your inventory. things really quickly, if you discover, oh, we've got more of something or less than something, you have to go online right away and change your inventory in your store.

So we have, we've developed, a system for that now that, one, we posted it at a certain day. And then, after we've harvested, if most of the things are harvested and we have a pretty good idea of what we've got, we'll go through and update the numbers a little bit on the inventory just to make sure it reflects what we actually have some fine tuning.

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So you can say, okay, I think we're going to have, we wouldn't be 10 short of this, so we'll just knock 10 off of that. and on the store and it'll just show less, right? Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:39:47] Do you offer the same product pricing and quantities online as you would at the market?

Hermann Bruns: [00:39:59] The pricing. So we decided really early on, and this was because we couldn't figure out a fast, on the fly. We couldn't think of a better way of doing it, but we decided that the online store is gonna be about extra work. and we're going to need to, re put that it somehow captures some of that extra work back, in pricing.

And we felt it's also a convenience for our customers and they would be, they would be willing to pay for it. So what we did is we just tacked on 25 cents onto it. every item that we sold. so if an item was two 50, on the store or on, at the market, we would just charge 2 75 on the store.

so that's the basically the way we've done it. And, that's what, Y I hesitate a little bit about offering too many incentives to use the store just because. Then you're going to be giving up some of that money that you need to cover the fact that you're putting all this work into the store.

Yeah. So that's how I felt about it. Anyway. other people could feel differently about it, too. And maybe, there's, there are ways that you could use, you create incentives that, are interesting for people on the store and don't really cost you too much.

Diego Footer: [00:41:10] Yeah.

I guess it's that balance of minimizing cost. To incentivize somebody to get that insurance of I'm selling it advance. And, or how much is that insurance of selling upfront worth to you and maybe it's worth all. I'll take a little less knowing that it's done versus, getting full price. And like you said, you're gambling.

Maybe I sell it all. Maybe I don't know.

Hermann Bruns: [00:41:34] Yeah, exactly. And every farmer is going to come to a conclusion, on a given day I might come to a conclusion on a particular crop on that too. Where I think, oh man, I should have done it differently or whatever. But, yeah, I think that, For the most part, we just decided to do it this way.

we can offer some other things. Like it's easy for us to offer, maybe some different pack sizes that we wouldn't offer at the market, for example. so that's something that we can do on the store. and so there's a few things like that, that we do that you can only get through the store.

And that's our way of also incentivizing people to use the store because, okay, this, if you want this item, it's in short supply, it's going to sell out like you, like I said, the first January, the first few weeks of cherry tomatoes, we know they're going to sell out because they just aren't producing what we know we can sell.

And so if you want to, the stores, people are going to get it first. So there's your incentive. That's how I see it anyway, right? Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:42:32] W what about on the fulfillment side? So there's a couple ways I've heard farmers do this. If they have a market pickup, one is they just go to market. Like they normally would, a customer comes and then they.

Pull the product from their offerings and assemble it there and say, okay, Joe, here's your stuff. The other way is you have a list of orders and you pack them all separate. So they're already bagged boxed. You go to market with those bags or boxes. Joe comes up here's Joe's box. It's already done. Boom, take it.

You're on your way. What do you guys do and how do you like it?

Hermann Bruns: [00:43:08] Yeah, so we do the ladder and, yeah. There's you certainly could do it. the way you first described, if you have, if it's mostly market and you get like half a dozen orders, you can put them. And I actually thought about that. Yeah. We could hire someone to help us pack these orders at the market.

and just pack them before the customers come. Like it's just, as we're setting up, somebody could, we could have someone for an hour and they could pack like, a couple of dozen orders, but we were getting in, at least when we first started, we were getting. Two 300 orders twice a week.

And there was just no way that we would do that. It'd be able to do that at the market. And they would, and if there's any issues you're screwed. That's the market. You can't really say, oh, let's run out and grab another head of lettuce because I know I got it out there. Yeah. we, yeah, we realized pretty quickly we need to pack the orders, before we went to the market or to, to the delivery point.

And so yeah, we basically take all our produce, set it up as if it was a market. So it's an extra step of work again, Because you're basically doing the work that a customer would do, in doing all this packing. So normally a customer comes to your market table, they have their own lists. They haven't had to send it to me.

We haven't had to print it out and interpret it. they just come and they say, okay, I'm going to get one of these, one of these, one of these, and I get to the cash out table. And it turns out to be 20 bucks. I have them 20 bucks and I'm done. But, now we're doing a bunch of that work. We're receiving their order in print form, and then we're having to go through and do all their selections for them and put it in a box and get it ready.

And that's why we wanted that extra 25 cents, per item, because that would work out on a 10 item box. It would give us about two 50 and we figured that we should be able to, we'll be able to pack the order and maintain the store. so that's what we do. We basically create we'd set up our same market table is actually inside our packing sheds layout, all the, in alphabetical order, because that's how we're packing it.

And then, got these printed, orders, everyone's orders printed, two or 300 of them. And we just start walking around with our shopping baskets, the same shopping baskets we use at the market. She and our staff is just spending time doing packing all these orders, Voting them into our boxes that, that people can then, pickup.

Yeah. And yeah, it's a bunch of work, but, yeah, that's why we need the extra money.

Diego Footer: [00:45:29] Here's the other thing that people might not think about it now I'm wondering, is this something you really need to consider if you go to market and you're just selling to retail customers, that market, everything's boxed up tight.

There's not a lot of airspace. If you're boxing up 200 orders in boxes, not every box is jammed full. Do you need an extra truck? Do you need more room to get all this stuff to market?

Hermann Bruns: [00:45:51] Yup. it uses more space for sure. We discovered that too. the other thing that happens is when we came across really quickly, We used to have, we have, a box, a system of stackable boxes.

and people use Rubbermaid tubs, but we have, we happen to have a, a box that kind of stacks one way and you turn it the other way and it nests when it's empty. So when we take our produce, we've got these rolling pallets where we stack on, we can stack four stacks of these green boxes that we use.

They're mentally a little bit, they don't have lids. They just sit on top of one another and we can stack from seven high and it comes out to about here, on me. and great. So that's good. And we can, every box, like you say is full, but now you've got all these people ordering and they're all different size quantities and, all kinds of different stuff together.

and then the other thing that happened is that we realized is okay, we can't stack these order boxes anymore. Because sure enough, the first customer that com is going to be the one whose orders at the bottom of seven boxes. And you're thinking, oh my God, you don't have to lift seven boxes off to get it.

This guy's ordered. So we created, a shelving system that we could put on our rolling pallets so that then we could pull the bottom box out because it was sitting on a shelf. All the rest were sitting on shelves on top of one another. So suddenly that shelving system was another inch added on. And, it's suddenly your same seven boxes are another foot higher.

and, so luckily our truck was just able to accommodate it and we had enough space, but yeah, it definitely just started using more volume. just because, and what we did too, is sometimes we would put, we would, if someone didn't order much, then we put two or three orders in one box to try and get them as full as we could, because otherwise yeah, it would just eat up space like crazy.

But yeah, it definitely uses a bit more space.

Diego Footer: [00:47:44] so given all these challenges and having now everything's normalized, I'll say with, COVID going down in your, like about 50% market, 50% online, what are your overall thoughts on selling online? Do you think it's something every farmer should consider, do you think you should consider it if the situation's right.

Where do you stand on that?

Hermann Bruns: [00:48:07] Yeah, I don't think there's a one size fits all. I think, every farmer is going to have to look at what they're, what their own situation is, what they like, how they like to do things. I think it's definitely a customer convenience where we're going to continue to do it as far as I can see, unless our customers just quit, stop ordering from us.

we're continuing to promote the store, because we think, now that we put the effort into doing it and we, and if you're gonna set up all your produce to be able to pack online orders, you know that you don't want to do it for 10 orders. You want to do it for a hundred, if you can.

because it's the same amount of setup and take down time to, to create the order situation itself. so we're going to continue to offer it. I think it's a convenience that a lot of our customers are going to want. some obviously won't and so there's going to be, I think it'll settle down.

a certain percentage and we'll continue to do it that way and offer both models. just because, yeah, I know from before that some of our market customers just said, we couldn't make it down to the market at that time or whatever something was going on. And, we want it to be able to put in an order, and this is just going to be, some of them, we were doing it, we were, they were just emailing us orders and we would just do it on the side, just do it and not advertise it at all, that we were doing it.

But now that we got the store, we got our systems worked out. I feel like we're going to continue to do it that way unless our customers completely walk away from it. And then at some point we would say, okay, not worth doing anymore, but if they want to do it, I think it's definitely, a, an advantage over just farmer's markets for them.

Diego Footer: [00:49:46] It a 50 50 split. Now about how many orders would you say you're getting online per rep per day, each week, like per market each week?

Hermann Bruns: [00:49:57] so we have two markets, we're getting around a hundred orders month.

Diego Footer: [00:50:02] Yeah. So there's only a hundred orders. How long and how many people does it take to pack those hundred boxes on the back end?

Hermann Bruns: [00:50:13] Yeah. That's that's a good question. I'm just thinking now, I think we're at about. Between two and three orders of two and three, between two and three hours, for three people. So we've got three people working on that are dedicated to packing orders on Wednesday morning. so they start laying it all out, probably around eight o'clock or 8, 7 30, let's say seven 30.

And by 10 30, they should be pretty close to being done, for the a hundred orders. it doesn't matter a lot, if you get 125, it actually doesn't take all that much longer because some of the time is spent, the pack is setting up and taking down, but that's roughly where we're at.

Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:51:00] So if we said it's 200 orders a week for the two that's about 18 person hours that go into making that happen. Yeah. Okay. And how do you feel like, do you think that's worth the labor trade-off or do you, would you like, obviously you're saying, Hey, yeah, if you do 1 25, it's about the same, but at a hundred that works.

Is there a number that you think if it got down to it just wouldn't work

Hermann Bruns: [00:51:29] well, Yeah. the economics, I haven't recently done a quick math. I should take my, what I should do is take a look at my overall sales for those 200 orders and figure out how much of it is that 25 per 25 cent, how much am I getting to devoting to the store and the packing and seeing if the covering those 18 hours, my guess would be that it would probably still cover it.

And, but yeah, once you get down to less than 50, we might have to look at other ways of doing it. Maybe there'll be some other way we can think of doing it, that we can reduce our hours. like we could conceivably do some of it at the market. Let's say, because that would save us, setting it up.

That would be an option where I'd look at that and I'd say, okay, I've got staff that I'm hiring at the market to help me with packing. I can just make sure we get a dedicated extra person to come and quickly walk along the, if I've got 50 orders, they'd have to walk along our market table 50 times and grab what they need for the order.

So that would be another way of doing it. How many of you probably, you could probably figure out little ways to, do it in a more efficient way. Yeah. Yeah.

Diego Footer: [00:52:40] You just, like you said, it comes down to the numbers, like you said, and what you're doing in terms of just the tech side of things.

And let's include customer service in that. So if you include customer service and managing the online store, now that things are set up, like we've gotten past the initial setup on a normal week. How many hours do you think you have into that?

Hermann Bruns: [00:53:03] yeah, I should really know that off the hop, but I'm thinking that, it probably takes, roughly an hour, to type in our inventory. Maybe let's say one to two hours between adding new products and taking, because lots of times, on a vegetable farm in particular, things are always changing.

you never have the same list of products. And so you're going to have to take some products off and put other ones on. and then you go through and you update the inventory for all your items. So that's probably, at least an hour of work, probably a little bit more. and then preparing the orders like you have to, then once you get them all, yeah, we have to do.

export them out of, where we're using local line, of course. And we have to export them and, set them up so that we can efficiently pack them. So we actually, we export them into Excel. then we have one of our, our office person, does a lot of formatting to that Excel sheet so that it becomes, really easy to, for the packing crew to see what's, what was ordered.

And they just, she puts it in a format that makes it easier for them to pack it. So that takes her, Probably a couple hours to do that actually takes longer than you think. And I'm actually want to, I'm going to probably approach a local line with, with maybe an idea on how they can help us with that, to try and fix to, to reduce that time.

so that's definitely, a chunk of time there. And then we do some tech support. Still people will email us and say, oh, I tried to order something, but I couldn't because this has happened. And then we have to, either folding them or, email them and help respond to that.

So I'm probably thinking we're probably looking at for sure, four hours for each market.

Diego Footer: [00:54:52] Yeah. so you're probably so four hours of customer service person.

Hermann Bruns: [00:54:56] Yeah. Customer service being, yeah. the whole, setting up the store, like maintaining the store or maintain the inventory each week.

and, taking the orders, preparing them ready for our packing crew, by exporting them out of the, it's not just a matter of that. We can just go hit print in a way that they print out. It just doesn't look, it doesn't come out in a format that, that is efficient for us to pack them. If you have very few orders and you have very few products, you'd probably could just hit print, but ours are not that simple.

so that definitely adds another, some more time in there.

Diego Footer: [00:55:31] Yeah. So you're at about doing some math here when you're like 30 hours out of for 200 orders and that's about nine minutes of labor per order. So if you think about it at the end of the day, you got to cover nine minutes. Hourly wage and benefits and whatever to break even on that cost.

So you gotta be above that. So your 25 cent and your product markup your service charge, whatever it is, has to be cover that we'll call it 10 minutes.

Hermann Bruns: [00:56:03] Yup. Exactly. That's roughly what we're hoping that it's doing. and I can't say that I T totally, verified that it's doing that, but, on a rough envelope back of the envelope way, we figure we're in the ballpark there.

and that we are getting enough. there's one other aspect that I haven't mentioned yet, and that is, payment. so one of the things we instituted, farmer's markets are strictly cash. Pretty much, at least ours have been strictly cash up until now, but now with COVID, everyone was looking for not a cashless ways of paying.

we offered each. and some people offer, credit card as well. But, I decided not to go to credit, gone down the credit card road. I just said to just offer each answer because in our customers pretty much accepted that, but then suddenly, you're not handing you, you've got a tracking, a whole tracking component that you have to do now to track, your sales, whether you got paid or not, because someone can say, yeah, I sent you an transfer, but you have to check whether you actually got it.

Whereas at the farmer's market, you tell someone that, oh, your bag of produce is 20 bucks. They hadn't get 20. and the transaction is done. You don't need any, you don't need to check anything. it's an automatic check. so that's a G a big factor for us is, running down all and making sure we got all our events.

That takes a lot of time.

Diego Footer: [00:57:32] What about buying product from other farmers? I know you mentioned, I think you said you get apples from another farmer. Do you have a situation where like at certain markets, you said, do the rules, like you're maybe not able to sell something. So being able to take control of that on an online store.

now maybe you could sell stuff that you couldn't sell at a farmer's market either because there's already a competitor selling that or because of, they want it to be farmer only, but now it's like, Hey, they're farmers, you've built relationships. You can aggregate and you can do that online.

And that's outside of those farmer's market bylaws. Do you see that as an advantage at all?

Hermann Bruns: [00:58:10] Yeah, it could be an advantage. the problem is that because my, all my delivery or my pickup locations are still at the farmer's market, they are viewing it as, okay. It's still coming under our rules.

So that's why I, but certainly there are, there are other locations where yeah, I've done that. Exactly. That we put things on from other, lots of other growers. and now I've also started doing some processed items. we have a really cool salad dressing company in our valley here that does organic salad dressing.

we have an organic elderberry syrup, farmer, and, let's see there's one or two other products that we do as well. We do frozen items from other that's another one that's good because we can offer frozen items and not have to, risk taking them to the market and not selling them.

We just say, okay, we're only putting them on the online store and we're not. risk the melting, it's going to be an online order only. so there are some other things that you can do that way and offer other products, that yeah, you wouldn't want to offer up or wouldn't be allowed to offer at the market.

and, but sometimes I'm still constrained a little bit because my pickup locations happen to be at the part of the farmer's market. And so they sure get a little grumpy if we're offering something, that's not a lot of the farmer's markets, because we're also using, the farmer's market's store.

So this is the other thing that's unique to, I'm not sure it's unique to local line, but it's certainly a feature that we use in local line. And that is that the farmer's market, becomes one store and each vendor within that, is, has their own store that just gets fed into one umbrella.

And so that if a customer comes, you don't have to, get them to go to, this, click on this link to go to that, to buy their bread and go and click on that link to buy their meat and this link to buy their vegetables or whatever. they can go to one store and they can order it all at once.

And that at checkout, those items get split into the different vendors and they check out individually and then they'll just go around to those vendors and pick it up the margin. Is it

Diego Footer: [01:00:13] the market who runs the hub will pick up your stuff?

Hermann Bruns: [01:00:16] Yeah. no. The customer comes and picks it up at your stand.

So yeah. the local line has the option of being a hub as well. If you wanted to set up your farmer's market so that the farmer's market did the aggregating, then you would set up a hub, but we're not doing any aggregating the way we do it. If we use it as a, just as a farmer's market model where people can just order from every vendor at the farmers.

And then just go around and pick it up at that vendor's booth as they're coming to the farmer's market anyway. there's advantages this way and that way. And it depends on what your setup is, how you want to do it. So that's partly why I run into a little bit of a problem because then it's showing up on the farmer's market, web their online store that we're showing that we're selling some products that aren't allowed to be sold in the market.

I see. I see, got it. Got it.

Diego Footer: [01:01:09] One other question on farmer's market logistics. One way to keep track of who's picked up boxes is you have boxes they're labeled and when a box is gone, it's gone. Somebody picked it up. When a box is there, you can see who hasn't come. Do you feel the need to go beyond that?

Do you have a printout of orders? And when somebody comes, do you have them sign something? Do you check it off? What's the process for discharging a box? Once a customer comes to you.

Hermann Bruns: [01:01:36] Yeah. initially we did have a little sign-off segment because we didn't know how they were paying and we had to re we had to track, how are they paying?

Are they paying cash? Are they paying check? Are they paying each answer now? they changed that in the platform so that our customers at checkout say how they're going to pay. so they have to say, they're going to set in each answer or whatever. So we already know. So all that, they, we do print out a master list, and we post that master list at our market table.

So then people come up to that and they scan down and look for their name. And beside that, we'll have put in a number because we discovered really quickly that it's much faster to find, someone's produce box. If it has a number on it, then if it has their last, their name, Because with names, you have to read each name individually to find it, and you can easily overlook it with numbers.

It's much, much faster. You can quickly look at and scan down the numbers and find it right away. it was it took us a month to figure that out. But once we did, we thought, geez, that little tiny thing, it makes a huge difference at pickup. So that's the

Diego Footer: [01:02:41] number or the boxes stacked in number order too,

Hermann Bruns: [01:02:44] but they're not, yeah, they're mostly stacked in numbered ordered.

Yeah. So if I know that it's, they're not exact exactly because we're packing orders simultaneously. Like we have three people packing, so they're not necessarily all stacked exactly the same, but all the one to twenties are going to be in one section and the 20 to 40 will be, in another section.

And so I can quickly narrow it down and say, okay, it's gotta be right here, which we tried to do with alphabetically, with people's last names. But, it's amazing how you just it's much faster to find a box that has a number on it. So that's why we create a master list. the Packers have that master list as they pack that order, they write down a number next to that person's name.

And they also label that box with the same number. And then the person comes along and says, okay, I'm number 10, box number 10. And so we look around and grab number 10 and give it to them. And that's basically all, we already know how they're going to pay, unless they change it at market. And if they had said, okay, they were going to pay by each answer and they decide to pay cash, then we have to record that.

But then later on our office person can go down and say, okay, all the cash and the check ones, we're going to assume that they were paid because we are. They did it at market. So we don't have to worry about those. We just have to go and look for all the transfers in our bank

account. So then she opens up our bank account and scans down there for every, she has to match basically every, each transfer to every order.

Unfortunately, there isn't a really good electronic way of doing it has to be done at this point. We have to do it manually and that, that does take some time, but it also means I don't pay since each answers are free. I don't pay it, a credit card fee, That starts eating into money too, from my perspective.

Diego Footer: [01:04:24] it's a cool system that you've really figured out just to close this one out. Do you have any other further advice, words of encouragement, words of caution, thoughts for people who are considering diversifying out of a farmer's market and going on.

Hermann Bruns: [01:04:41] yeah, I would say that, definitely consider it, don't believe don't necessarily get sucked into thinking how that it's super simple because of course the tech companies and the platforms, they will tell you, oh, this is super easy to do, but in reality is it all takes time.

And, there's all kinds of little, technical, glitches and things that you have to learn and learn how to do and learn how to deal with. but I like it. I like, I like the, the idea that we're on this leading edge. We're giving people more options than just coming to farmer's markets for a four, four hour window a week.

we're giving them a few more options. And, I look forward to continuing and maybe taking it to the next level, adding other products to it, or maybe adding another pickup location that isn't connected to a farmer's market or something like that. there's other things that we could do with it.

And, yeah, it just, it's going to be very individual depending on what what your situation is. And, it's certainly worth a try to see, of course we were helped in that, we, when we went to that whole system, it was just, the customers were really motivated to do it. and you've got that.

That's really what you want you to do is if you can go off of what your customers want. when we initially started to yeah. They were asking us for, being able to buy and, things in bulk. And then we had to figure out, we got to figure out a way, can we, how do we get it? Let them know what's available in bulk, what the options are, what the costs are and make it easy for them to order it.

And for Easter, for us to be able to receive those orders and stuff like that. if you're starting to offer those sorts of things, then the store becomes more, more interesting. Whereas if you're doing fine at farmer's markets and you don't really have, you don't want to make it more complex, it definitely makes it more complex.

the farmer's market is the simplest and most straightforward thing you can do. So it's the balancing act there. Sure.

Diego Footer: [01:06:36] do you think your business is better off because you have that additional sales.

Hermann Bruns: [01:06:42] Yeah, I think it's diversity is always good. because it gives you the option to do a few different things.

You're not quite as beholden to one way of doing things. and so we could conceivably do some sort of, it's like a, we can offer a modified CSA thing where people can order their own thing. There's lots of different marketing routes. We could go with this store now that we have it.

and we're just working the way we, what seems to be working right now. But I think anytime you have an opportunity, Be a little bit more diverse in how you sell things. It just gives you a little bit more, security that, if one thing starts going down, some farmer's market is, gets moved to a different location, which is a bad location.

I've still got my store. I've still got that. I can reach my customers. I can create a better, a different pickup location. I've got the option to do something. whereas if you were just completely just going to the market and we were totally dependent on that market and they moved to a bad location, you're you're going with them.

Yeah.

Diego Footer: [01:07:45] It opens up that idea of what's possible. And it's like a lot's possible. It gives you that optionality, like you said. yeah. Right on. thanks for taking the time to chat today, Herman. I really appreciate it. Good luck with it. Yeah.

Hermann Bruns: [01:07:57] great to meet you and thanks for the really, interesting and insightful questions.

I thought you, you really got it. Nailed there. Thank

Diego Footer: [01:08:04] you. All right. Cool. That's it. So I'm just gonna.

www.readyfarmerone.com