

2017 Star Acre Farms Annual Report

Star Acre Farms, LLC
8412 Alkire Street
Arvada, CO
303-882-0632

Strategic Highlights

- 31 families served thru our Community Supported Agriculture
- 25 weeks of providing food to the community; 17 weeks of share distribution
- Over 1000 lbs donated to various community food organizations
- Donated two farm to table dinners and a CSA vegetable share to the Ralston House's yearly auction
- Over 1200 hours logged by community volunteers
- Outreach and Education in the form of lectures and farm tours
- Hosted 5 First Friday on the Farm Festivals
- Discounted produce available to families in need; Two low income families received no-cost full shares during distributions
- Participation in Food Stamp Program (SNAP), including self-imposed double up program (If using SNAP, customers received double the amount of produce)
- Partnered with Arvada Veggie Van
- Continued to participate in community farmers markets – Edgewater, Arvada and Golden; Added participation in the Crossroads Artisan's Market.
- Participated in the Arvada Harvest Festival, St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Arvada Days.
- Organic growing/farming education provided for 3 working shareholders
- Joined Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

Financial Highlights

Star Acre Farms, owned by Becky Scharfenberg has completed its third growing season. The farm saw another year of small profits, however we expect even greater rewards next year. This year we reinvested in the farm by purchasing more small farm tools, two new greenhouses (one temporary at the site and a larger, permanent one at our home for seedlings). We also bought a tractor mid-season and expect much more production due to the purchase. We cut back to a part-time farm manager but were able to invest in full time help at our farm stand.

Operating Highlights

Star Acre Farms is run by a joint effort of the Scharfenberg Family. Thru workshares and volunteer opportunities and equipment availability we were able to plant more crops, utilizing our space better. We participated in several farmers markets which included Arvada, Edgewater, Golden and Crossroads. We were able to again, have the invaluable farm stand open six days a week.

Looking Ahead

We at Star Acre Farms wish to continue our lease agreement with the City of Arvada. Closing out our third year, we continue to learn and look forward to obtaining even more knowledge.

We continue to develop our relationships with other vendors and local artisans. Our First Friday on the Farm Festival continues to be a big hit in our community! We have partnered with Iron Gait Ranch and have obtained manure to spread over our fields for the winter. We continue to offer local honey provided by the Frangiosa Farms and fish (salmon/halibut) offered by Wild Woman Fish Company. These partnerships allow us to offer diversity to our community. We have also partnered with Early Morning Orchard which adds a fruit variety to our offerings to the community.

We continue to invest in perennials. We again increased our rhubarb, strawberries and raspberries along our north fence line. Our garlic chives and Russian sage are thriving at the west line – we added irises. We plan on putting in raised beds on the west side of our area. We envision this to help us be more productive in the herb and root vegetable areas. All these plantings will give us a better offering for our farm stand, shares and make our area more eye appealing.

Our Farm Manager continues to give us more community involvement. We had several school tours and it allowed for more volunteer hours at our farm.

We bought a tractor! We invested in a tractor about mid-season. This new, to us, piece of machinery will be a game changer for us. We will now be able to fully plow and plant the vegetable fields.

Community Outreach/Involvement

- This was the third year for First Friday on the Farm. This venture continues to be very successful. Engaging in more local artisans – averaging 12 participating vendors each month. Our First Friday on the Farm is growing with an average monthly attendance of 150 community members. We continue to invite the Arvada Fire Department – always a local favorite for the kids. Our farm stand was open and available with produce during our First Friday. We will continue this monthly festival, as we feel that it brings our community together.
- We hosted a talk on Seed Planting at the Four Seasons Farmers Market in Wheat Ridge. We talked about how to start your garden from seeds and gave demonstrations.
- CSA (Community Support Agriculture) members were offered to harvest their own produce at the farm, serving as a family-friendly community asset. We had 31 CSA shares this year, an increase of 6 shares from the previous year.
- Growing advice and tips are frequently given out. We are continually engaging community members on the best way to grow vegetables, use compost and harvesting. Farmers at Star Acre Farms have made themselves available at the farm, at our farmers markets, thru our website, on phone calls and e-mails to answer questions for the community.
- Logged over 1200 hours in volunteer hours. We had many volunteers help out in different capacities this year. They helped in transplanting, weeding, planting, harvesting, operating the farm stand and readying for the farmers markets – just to name a few. Having our Farm Manager available helped us to engage the community and allowed us to schedule volunteers on a consistent basis.

- We participated in the Arvada Harvest Festival again this year. Another successful year. We plan on attending every year. We feel that having a local farm at the Harvest Festival gives the community the real sense of the Festival. We not only provide local vegetables to the festival goers, but also engaged in discussions on how to grow various types of vegetables in our area.
- We participated in Arvada Days. We engaged with the community and discussed our various programs with attendees.
- The farm stand was open 6 days a week on a consistent basis. We posted regular hours of operation and adhered to having the farm stand open with a variety of plants and vegetables available to the community.
- We participated in EvolveExpo for the second year. This show is held at the National Western Stock Show Complex in Denver. This was held in May and allowed us to reach out to a broader community. We have found that individuals are seeking us out at this venue.
- Working shareholders have been helpful for providing the much needed labor for the farm. In exchange for a weekly commitment, they are provided with a share of the harvest. This year we hosted 3 working shareholders.
- Joined Rocky Mountain Farmers Union and help drive the change to the farming culture in Colorado and all over the US.
- Partnered with Arvada Veggie Van. Although we were not involved from the start, we reached out to the Arvada Veggie Van. During the month of September we provided vegetables that were distributed. We will be providing shares during the 2018 season to help foster this program.

Community Impact

- We donated vegetables to several community food organizations. In addition, we donated a CSA vegetable share and two Farm to Table events (held out at the farm in August and September) to the Ralston House's annual fundraising event. These items were well received; we will do this on an annual basis. We were also able to provide two families with full shares for the harvest season.
- We participated in the Edgewater, Arvada and Golden Farmer's Markets this year. We added an additional market – Crossroads. We continued to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at all our markets and farm stand. We self-imposed participating in the double up program. This allows SNAP participants to receive double the produce for the same cost.