

MN Agriculture: Kornder Farms, Beef and Pumpkins



Day 6 of my "30 Days of MN Agriculture" is the **Kornder Farms**. Tony Kornder is from Belle Plaine. They sell beef and pumpkins. Quite the combination, but it works great for them. I am just going to start with "I love this story!" The Kornder's truly have their heart and soul in their farming business. Hope you enjoy their story!

Social Media Sites:

Website: KornderFarms.com

Facebook: [Kornder Farms Beef](#)

Tell me a little about your farm and/or business?

Our family farm consists of about 450 acres of owned and rented land. We raise corn, soybeans, rye, pumpkins, and beef cattle. We sell world class pumpkins to area orchards and garden centers. We also market our beef to restaurants and directly to the consumers at farmers markets and on farm visits.

How long have you farmed or been in business?

I was born into farming, as were my father and grandfather. I enjoy genealogy, and have traced our farming roots back 8 generations to Schillingsfurst Germany. My family was a charter member of the St. Paul Farmers Market when it was established and continued selling produce there until 2009. I started direct marketing beef in 2010 as a way to add value to the operation, as the

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produce part of the business faded out.

Tell me a little about what you grown/raise/produce or service provided.

We sell our world class pumpkins and other fall décor to area apple orchards and garden centers. We also have a small U Pick operation on the farm. Area residents really enjoy it, even with all of the pumpkin options available on the Hwy 169 corridor between Belle Plaine and Jordan. We also sell steaks, burgers, ground beef and beef sticks to Café Carlson in Minnetonka, Jims Apple Barn, and MN Harvest Orchard. We also attend several farmers markets and craft shows to sell directly to consumers. We even do special cut orders, like our famous 2” thick cowboy Ribeye.

What makes your farm/business unique or special? What are you proud of?

Our pumpkins stand out. We raise pumpkins that are big. Big, hefty thick stems, solid walls. We plant a little more each year because people have come to expect that quality of pumpkin at our outlets. When the phone rings for an order, it's always “I need some more of those big handle ones!”

I am especially proud of the beef products I produce. I really enjoy the compliments and the conversation with customers about the marbling in the steaks, the heat in the Habenero beef sticks, or the juicy perfection of a grilled burger. One customer of mine used to regularly dine at Manny's Steakhouse in downtown Minneapolis. Not anymore, he tried a custom cut 2” Cowboy Ribeye and hasn't been back to Manny's since.

Why do you grow/raise/produce? What went into your decision to do what you do?

We found a niche with the pumpkins. Location was a big factor. We are less than 1 mile from Mn Harvest Orchard, our biggest client. Our soil type also played a role. We farm mostly sandy soils, and 140 bushel corn is a pretty good year. We find ways to make the most of what we have. Raising cattle and direct marketing beef is a way to maximize the value of a great product. I found a way to add value to work we were already doing, without adding a lot of extra labor.

What do you love most about farming/business?

I really love the work. I am happiest out on the tractor. Working alongside my dad, and now with my own kids, it just doesn't get any better. I really don't consider it work. How's that old saying go? “Find a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life.”

What is one thing you wish consumers knew about what you do or your farm/business?

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Farming is a business. Yes it provides a great life, a great place to raise a family and all of the “Green Acres and Mayberry” ideals. But the bottom line is it is a business. It’s hard. It is not for the weak. There are so many factors that are simply out of your control. It takes a lot of water, sunshine, good soil and hard work to raise a crop, but the number one ingredient is faith.

Who are your customers? Or what would you like to tell your customers?

Anyone can be my customer. If you love a great steak, look me up. I am working to create a website that will accommodate on line ordering and shipping. There are a few things that need to be worked out yet, but I really think that is a great way to broaden my customer base, and keep in contact with current customers.

What makes Minnesota the place to farm/grow/raise/produce/service?

There is a great locally grown movement here. The MN Grown program is fantastic.

What is your favorite Minnesota location?

Our farm. Home is where your heart is.

More pics. . .