

ALASKA GROWN

Farmer Profile



Wheels are turning at Johnson Family Farm

Hydroponic growing makes a lot of sense. It's possible to do it year round and in a lot smaller space than other ways of growing (it's) very smart for Alaska production because of our short growing season. It makes things that are not usually able to be grown in the state an option. – Bill Johnson

FAIRBANKS - Starting as a truck hauler, Bill Johnson, was originally known as 'dynamite bill' for his experience hauling explosives. To his friends in the trucking industry this nickname has taken a turn towards agriculture, they now call him 'lettuce bill' or 'farmer bill'.



In 1982 Bill delivered to many florists on his truck route from Miami, FL to places all over the continental U.S. including Chicago and New York City. This new



avenue of business (floriculture) really 'got his wheels turning'; his interests in farming piqued by the very florists he delivered to. Soon after he began hydroponic growing on a 3' x 3', 36 hole, hydroponic square.

Through a myriad of truck driving and other jobs Bill landed in Fairbanks and still drives trucks, delivering loads to POGO mine and the like.

The difference now is Bill's side job, which has certainly exploded from the 3' x 3' square. Johnson Family Farm has expanded every year since its opening; from an 800 square foot warehouse to

the 6000 square foot building he is working on now. "There came a point when the hobby changed and the options were expand or die". The Johnson's, both Bill and his wife Christine, have definitely invested themselves into the farmer lifestyle.

This expansion has led to sales throughout the community with his focus product being micro-greens. He has several varieties of these greens including radish, cilantro, sweet pea, and arugula. Another major product of his is heirloom basil.

His hope is to continue growing and selling fresh produce to Alaskans throughout the cold winter months while being sustainable using alternative energy for growing.

This farmer profile is brought to you by the
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