

# ALASKA GROWN

## Farmer Profile



## Curious Keyes Runs Glacier Valley Farm

PALMER— Ten years ago, Arthur Keyes was a produce manager for Carrs. Now, he's a zucchini and strawberry producer. How did he get into farming? "I moved into farm country... and I'm kind of a curious guy," he answered with a smile.

Keyes moved from Anchorage to the Matanuska Valley with his wife Michele in 2001. His curiosity led him to plant 180 zucchini plants on his property

the next year. Being a part-time farmer while commuting to keep his job as a Carr's produce manager took up all Keyes' time, but he wasn't overwhelmed—in fact, he wanted to plant more.

In September of 2002, Keyes' stepped down as a produce manager and began his new life as a full-time farmer.

Keyes exclusively sold vegetables wholesale until 2006, when he and his father-in-law,

Ben Vander-Weele, started the South Anchorage Farmers Market. It was difficult initially to find a place to

hold the market, and Keyes said the first week he was very nervous, until a farmer approached him after only one hour and said with a grin, "I'm sold out."

The market continued to be successful, so Keyes added a Wednesday market in 2008 and a market in Eagle River in 2009. He now manages his 3 markets and sells at the Spenard market.

On top of selling zucchini wholesale and selling at farmers markets, Keyes started selling at a roadside stand in 2011. He sells at the corner of Inner Springer and the Glenn Highway using a Colony barn he bought this year as a store front on Saturdays and Sundays. Eventu-

ally, Keyes plans to restore the barn and install wood flooring and bathrooms.

One thing is sure: this 'curious kind of guy' is hooked on farming.



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