

# ALASKA GROWN

## *Farmer Profile*



## Green Winter Farm: Bursting with Basil

PALMER—For Crystal Boze, the basil shipped from Mexico available in stores just won't cut it.

"There's no comparison between fresh and shipped basil," she says. "Mine is fresher by far, for sure!"

Born in Alaska, Boze majored in Environmental Studies at the State University of New York and traveled the United States before coming back to Alaska in 2008. Four years later, she's married with two

children and has started "Green Winter Farm," a hydroponic basil growing operation. Boze started because she "just wanted to grow something."

"This was my hobby," Boze says, "I've been doing it for over a decade. But it's grown so big, it's not just a hobby anymore!"

Boze began experimenting with hydroponic growing in an insulated Connex with her husband a few years ago. They now grow year-round in a

profit—and I can still be a stay-at-home mom."

Boze began growing tomatoes and strawberries hydroponically, but decided to focus on basil because it is a specialty crop that is in high demand, and, she says, can be grown in large quantities in a very small space. Boze has big plans for the future though—she wants to expand her business to farm tilapia and grow other basic herbs, peppers and strawberries during the off-season.

Again, Boze focuses on the taste difference of a food crop grown locally: "There's just nothing like homegrown strawberries!" she gushes.

Excitement for the future runs high at the brand-new Green Winter Farm. "We can do this year-round," Boze says, "which is great, because there's a real lack of winter production in Alaska."

Boze is also grateful for the opportunity to pursue her passion while raising her young family. "Gardening is enriching— I'm doing what I love!"



500-square-foot building and a 2,100 square-foot greenhouse. They sell at Farmers Markets and all the Carrs-Safeway locations in Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley. "It's our way of bringing back the family farm," Boze says. "We can grow basil on a small scale and make a

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