

CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places & products*

A summer savory fundraiser sprouts the seed of success

From an act of charity more than 40 years ago evolved a Kings County herb-product company now on a path of national growth!

In 1958, Bram Lohr located to Kings County from Holland and, four years later, bought a farm on North Medford Road in Canning. Though his first main crop was potatoes, involvement in a fundraiser set the farm in a new direction.

“My father started growing summer savory - just a small patch to raise funds for a ladies group in our church,” says John Lohr, Bram’s son and president of Farmer John’s Herbs. “Then he saw

many ways to improve on how it was grown.”

Along with the crop’s potential, Bram recognized the need for a mechanized process. With little suitable machinery available, he began designing and building equipment to process the crop. Though he passed the farm on to John nearly 20 years ago, he continues creating machinery to increase the farm’s efficiency and growth.

As part of that growth process, the Lohrs began working with a local distributor to package and distribute the summer savory. Twenty years later, in 1999, they bought the company.

That purchase triggered the official launch of Farmer John’s Herbs. By 2004, the company was evolving into new types of products and, farm-wise, focused entirely on growing summer savory.

“We knew as a company we wanted to be more

creative with our summer savory,” says John. “First, we decided to create a stuffing mix.” Working with Dalhousie University’s food science department, they came up with a product they really liked, and began promoting it to grocery and retail gift stores.

“It was in the retail gift stores where the product took off,” says John. His wife and business partner Heather, a dietician and local gift store owner, helped design the new product and packaging to appeal to retail giftware clientele.

The product line continues to expand in its two markets - grocery stores and retail gift stores. “Our products are in the major Maritime grocery stores, and our specialty products in about 40 retail gift stores, with more in Newfoundland, Ontario, and Quebec,” says John. “And we’re looking at growing across the country.” The company provides direct delivery to about 200 stores.

As part of its evolution, Farmer John’s

Herbs became a certified organic processor. “We can bring in certified organic products, put them through our process for market, and they are still certified organic. We have these products in about 40 stores.”

What began as a simple act of charity has grown into a 10-person company, producing 15,000 pounds of summer savory annually. On the processing side, Farmer John’s Herbs now carries nearly 60 different products with everything packaged on site.

“I think we grow the best quality summer savory in the world right here,” says John. “We have so many great responses to our products, especially from local Nova Scotians. Our market has grown through word-of-mouth, from displays at industry trade shows, and through our great sales reps.”

“That church fundraiser really started something!”

Story and photo by Marlene Huntley



Kneeling in a field of summer savory, John Lohr shows examples of Farmer John’s Herbs products.



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