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IN HER BOOTS

July 27, 2015

Soil Sisters: Katy Dickson of Christensen Farm

By Lisa Kivirist | Photo By courtesy of Katy Dickson

Browntown, Wisconsin, may have a population of only 212, including Katy Dickson and her family at Christensen Farm, but small can be mighty when it comes to a woman-powered farm like Katy's. Built on diversification, Katy raises more than 80 varieties of vegetables on her family's farm along with raspberries, strawberries, currants and rhubarb along with eggs and honey that fuel her certified organic community supported agriculture (CSA) operation.



But what's the real fuel behind Katy's success? Community. "What keeps me going is my CSA member and market customers," shares Katy Dickson. "The appreciation they express when receiving my produce or when someone stops by while I'm working in the garden makes me realize how lucky I am to live in such a beautiful place and be able to work the land to produce healthy food for my family and community."



Community members can meet Katy Dickson of Christensen Farm during Soil Sisters: A Celebration of Wisconsin Farms and Rural Life on July 31 through August 2. Katy will teach a "Pesto Festo" workshop on Saturday, August 1 ([get tickets here!](#)), and then on August 2, you can experience her place along with over a dozen other women-owned organic and sustainable agriculture operations in the Green County area on the Tour of Farms, Sunday, August 2.

Are you dreaming of starting a farm like Katy's? Come out to Soil Sisters early on Friday, July 31 for a day-long intensive for beginning women

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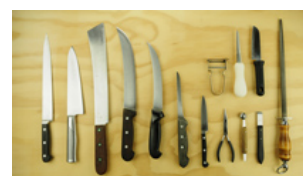


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farmers called [In Her Boots: Sustainable Agriculture For Women. By Women](#). Facilitated by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Rural Women's Project, these workshops provide opportunity for a detailed farm tour along with networking and resource sharing. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Read on to learn more about Katy:

Farming philosophy:

"A focus on our farm is to preserve the integrity of the land and work to increase and preserve its value for the next generation."

First faming experience:

"Feeding calves and driving tractor on my parents farm from the age of eight."

What's your favorite thing to eat during the summer?

"Pico de gallo made with every ingredient from the garden, plus some cumin and lime juice."

Personality traits necessary for a successful farmer:

"Patience. Multi-tasker. Appreciation for small miracles. Positive outlook on life."

What is your usual summer schedule:

"Wake. Eat. Work. Eat. Work. Play. Eat. Sleep."

How does your day start?

"Over our family breakfast, we go over a rough schedule for the day before we head out the door."

Strangest thing you've farmed:

"Ducks. They are so messy and noisy but they sure produce wonderful eggs."

What makes this business rewarding?

"Having people thank me for what I do and seeing my children run and play on the farm."

Where does your family's farming history root?

"My Great Grandfather Christensen emigrated from Denmark and farmed near Racine. My father had it in his blood and was a dairy farmer for 30 years. My mother's side is beef and wheat farmers in South Dakota."

Favorite tomato varieties:

"San Marzano."

Benefits of being a female farmer:

"I could be at home raising my kids while also having an occupation that I love."

Weirdest farming experience:

"Our heifer was a twin to a male calf and was thereby supposed to be infertile but lo and behold she's going to have a baby. We're pretty

excited.”

Why did you start the farm?

“When I was finishing graduate school and pregnant with my first child, I had this innate feeling that I had to grow organic produce.”

Personal heroes:

“My Grandma Gutknecht, Helen Keller, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Ohlson.”

Favorite food that you don’t personally grow:

“Avocados and any flavor of Sassy Cow Creamery ice cream.”

Favorite local food artisan:

“Mary White at Honey Bee Bakery.”

Lisa Kivist and her family run [Inn Serendipity Farm and B&B](#) outside Monroe, which is completely powered by the wind and sun. She is co-author with her husband, John Ivanko, of the new cookbook *Farmstead Chef*, along with *Rural Renaissance* and the award-winning *ECOpreneuring*.

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