

Written Profile

Farm: Okray Family Farms

Location: Plover, WI

Date of Origination: 1905

Industry Sector(s): Potatoes, Sweet Corn, Green Beans, Soybeans, Field Corn



Family tradition and hard work run deep in Okray Family Farms. These qualities, the current generation explains, are what make Okray Family Farms a sustainable farming operation. Passion for others and for the land drive this team of relatives to serve others by producing quality food, and we are excited to celebrate their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

The family farming operation was established in 1905 and has grown through the years guided by the family's mantra of slow, steady growth. Originating as a small produce buying and selling operation, the farm now encompasses over 7,000 acres. Their primary crop is potatoes, yet the family also produces sweet corn, green beans, soybeans and field corn.

As quoted in a feature article in Spudman Magazine (2007), Dick Okray states that, "one of the better parts of working in an industry, like the potato industry, that is constantly changing is having the support of the people who work with you." In this family business, support often comes from those who are related. Mike Finnessy, a descendant of founder Joseph Okray, is currently the president of Okray Family Farms, supported by a team comprised of Dick Okray, Chris Okray, Jim Okray, and Mark Finnessy, as well as many others.

Calculated risk and careful decision-making have enabled the family business to thrive for over a century. While they admit that risk-taking isn't their natural tendency, the Okrays understand the need to invest in new opportunities. Focusing on serving the retail industry as their primary client, the family works hard to understand the needs of their buyers. Consumers' desires change, which leads to a change in buyer demand. The family strives to stay on top of the changing market by planting new varieties, exploring new packaging options and ultimately serving the needs of their customers.

While they are proud of the family farming tradition, those who lead the operation today understand the reality of future challenges. Jim Okray, VP of Farm Operations, sees rising input costs, including the cost of energy, as the greatest obstacle the farm will have to overcome. In preparation for this challenge the farm is looking into ways to reduce their energy consumption as well as to map and reduce their carbon footprint.

A true love of people, those that work on the family farm and those they serve, epitomizes Okray Farms. "I just love the people," says Dick Okray in Spudman Magazine. "From getting to know our employees to our vendors to our customers - literally, there is none (industry) better." We extend our appreciation as we celebrate the contribution made by Okray Family Farms to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.