

Written Profile

Farm: Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc.

Website: www.zittels.com

Location: Eden, NY

Date of Origination: 1897

Industry Sector(s): Vegetables, Greenhouse, and Country Market



"Zittel's promise to offer the highest quality homegrown fruits, vegetables and plants while providing the best possible customer service."
Zittel's Country Market Mission Statement

While company mission statements are common, an operation that has a true commitment to family values, service, and continual excellence is rare – but that's exactly what you'll find with Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc.

The family began their commitment to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage** when George Zittel started farming in Eden Valley, New York, in 1897. Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc. currently includes 200 acres of fresh market vegetables, 4.5 acres of greenhouse production, and Zittel's Country Market.

The family-centered focus, coupled with insightful business management practices, has enabled Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc. to beat the odds of farm succession. In fact, the fifth generation of Zittel agriculturists are completing their college education right now, a new family-established expectation for working in the business. "My father was a visionary," explains Paul Zittel, "He said (to me) 'I'm going to sell you the farm, and work for you'." This set the precedence for proactive family involvement through generational change. When looking to the next generation, Paul admits, "I'm not the future, (they are) the future."

The Zittels are no stranger to innovation and progressive thinking. Their efforts, in conjunction with Cornell University and the Cooperative Extension Service, led to some of the most influential research in plastic mulching practices in the 1950's. And when supermarket chain leader Wegmans started leaning towards producers who employed Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques in place of traditional pesticides, the Zittels stepped up to the challenge. As a result, the Zittels manage pests in their greenhouses with beneficial insects and have received a federal grant to study the impact of beneficial insects on peppers and eggplants this year.

Involvement with the Farm Bureau has undoubtedly helped the Zittels longevity over the years. Having served on the State Farm Bureau Executive Committee, and as the New York Farm Bureau Vice President, Paul Zittel explains, "Somebody has to fight for us. Farm Bureau stands behind farms that are threatened," by eminent domain and other challenges.

The Zittels take pride in their land and what they produce. Paul Zittel concludes, "We look to the future. We want to be the best, not the biggest, but the best."

We congratulate the success of Amos Zittel and Sons, Inc. and appreciate their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

