

**Ann Slater  
Fresh Organic Vegetables**

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**30 Years in Commercial  
Production**



**Total Acreage: 6**

**Acres in Organic Production: 6 (1.5 in vegetables)**

**Certification: Pro-cert**

**Crops: lettuce, salad greens, green/yellow beans, spinach, potatoes, tomatoes - red, heritage, cherry, paste, onions, beets, summer and winter squash, peas - snow, snap, shell, bok choy and Chinese cabbage, peppers, carrots, leeks, garlic, Swiss chard, kale, etc.**

**Value-added products: certified organic CSA**

**Equipment: BCS Walk-behind rototiller, 2 furrow plough**

**On-farm facilities: storage and packing shed**

**Labor: my own**

**Weeks/year in production: 40**

**Total weeks making sales: 36**

**Markets: St. Marys Farmers' Market, Saturday mornings mid-May - end of November, CSA with delivery in St. Marys May - November, Woolfy's at Wildwood Restaurant, McCully's Hill Market**

**Special expertise: intensive production on small acreage, extended season in outdoor garden, marketing in small town**

**Farm Story: I grew up on the dairy farm where I still farm. It was a farm in the midst of the 'twenty-five' year transition to organic. I started market gardening as a teenager in the 1970's, growing vegetables organically and selling most of them on a street corner in the centre of St. Marys and from the farm gate - this was my summer job through high school and university. The dairy farm is now a certified organic dairy farm run by my brother and shipping milk to Organic Meadow. My separate farm - a market garden and small sheep flock is hidden away on the dairy farm.**

**Over the years I have continually added new crops, and occasionally dropped crops, but have always tried to keep in mind what vegetables people eat in my community. This selection of crops may be different than what I would grow for a more urban market, but allows me to continue to sell over 95% of my vegetables within 10 km of my farm.**

**Overtime I refined how I market - needing to find the balance between time spent marketing and time spent growing vegetables. The St. Marys Farmers' Market was established as a producer-based farmers' market with a focus on local products in 1992. At that time I moved my street corner table to the Farmers' Market and it has remained my major market. Soon after the farmers' market was established, recognizing the need to have a solid mid-week market for my produce I started a CSA. Most of my CSA members live in St. Marys and I drop their share at their doorstep Tuesday afternoons from May to November.**

**I have always farmed organically and became certified organic in the mid-1990's. With a focus on local markets, most of my customers do not require that I be certified, but over time I began to feel that certification was an important step for me. It allows me to acknowledge that 'organic' had some solid standards behind it. In addition, certification allows me to contribute to and be part of the wider organic community which I hope will continue to evolve and make 'organic' more environmentally sustainable.**

**Along the way, I also made the decision to stay small and to rely only on my own labour. Although, there have always been more market opportunities available I decided it is not my responsibility to fill them. I prefer to spend my**

time growing vegetables and doing the hard work in the field, not delivering vegetables to communities further down the road or managing workers.

My goal is to grow great tasting vegetables with care and concern for the environment and people. My hope is to see more small-scale farms growing and producing food for their local communities across the region and across the province. I hope others can see the opportunity for small-scale farming focused on local markets as a way to make a living and contribute to a better society.