

# Farm fresh and delivered to your door

## With no time to go to markets, the idea works

Rose Strong

In an economy where spending has been slashed by consumers and layoffs are announced on the news in an almost nonchalant fashion, it's hard to believe that anyone is brave enough to start a business, but that's what Michael Kemmerer and his partner Velga Kenigs did at the start of this year.

Bucks County Farm Fresh was born more out of necessity than anything else, after Kemmerer and Kenigs were laid off from the pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson late in 2009.

The company provides home delivery of farm fresh products to Central and Upper Bucks County customers. Kemmerer and Kenigs purchase products directly from the local farms and collect orders online for various packages based on customer need.

While working in a lab, Kemmerer was taking a business course at Delaware Valley College. As a project for the class he had to put together a business model. He would take some ideas to work to discuss and brainstorm with his colleagues; one of them happened to be Kenigs.

"I thought this would help to make fresh, local food accessible to more people who may not otherwise get out to farm markets or garden themselves," says Kemmerer. "How often do you get to eat produce for dinner that was picked fresh that morning?"

Kemmerer told a story of traveling with his wife to Germany a while back.

"My wife wasn't feeling very well from the long travel, but we had to eat."

We went to a restaurant in Germany, and she thought a salad may be light and easier to eat," he said. "She looked on the menu and ordered one and we were told



JOANNE GRAZIANO

Bucks County Farm Fresh is another way to get food fresh from local farms.

there wasn't any salad yet. We thought, 'What do they mean by yet?' and as we left, we saw a truck pull up with a crate of lettuce that still had its roots attached!"

Still, several years later, Kemmerer is amazed by that sight and says he saw that all over Europe while traveling there. "People over in Europe haven't diluted their food the way we have with processing," says Kemmerer.

Tweaking things to reflect real life, he and Kenigs put to work their proposal and presented first to the folks at Shady Brook Farms

who were most receptive to the concept that they sell their produce to Bucks County Farm Fresh based on a specific number of orders of whatever may be in season, every other week.

Kemmerer says what they thought would be a one-hour meeting turned into about three hours of a good exchange of ideas.

"It was scary. I mean, I worked in a lab for 15 years and never did anything like this. It has been a rollercoaster. Some farmers were skeptical and just didn't know what to make of us, coming in and

wanting to market their products for them by purchasing at a decent wholesale price," says Kemmerer.

Through the Farm Fresh web site, customers can browse the packages that offer meats combined with vegetables, bread, milk, fruit and eggs or just a vegetable and fruit package without the meat, milk or eggs.

Prices range from just over \$100 for the barbecue package down to a half of the fruit and vegetable package for about \$30. Quite reasonable for a delivery to your door, which comes every two weeks.

There is no contract to be signed to commit customers to a specific number of deliveries, making this convenient and friendly for those who want to access fresh, local food. Customers place an order online by noon on Monday of the week food will be delivered. Delivery is made on Thursday of that week. Payment is expected at the time of delivery by cash or check and online payment will be coming soon.

Leaving a cooler outside or being home at the time of the delivery are both optimum ways to get the orders.

Is he competing with the farm markets or community sustained agriculture [CSA].

"I don't see us competing with the farmers' markets or CSAs as the demographic I'm focusing on is the busy consumer with too little time to seek the food out in those ways, but want to eat well," says Kemmerer. "We want to make eating right, easy for busy families and here it is right at your door step."

BCFF's source for produce is very local and stays in about a 25 mile radius of Kemmerer's Central Bucks home.

A full-time job right now, and he hopes it is as close to year-round as possible. Kemmerer thinks if he keeps his capitol costs down, it will be the key to success.

"Right now, there are two of us doing all the work," he says. We do all the pickups of the food and all the deliveries. If we get any bigger, we'll probably have to stretch our delivery out to Friday, but that would be a problem we'd like to have," says Kemmerer smiling.

To find out more about Bucks County Farm Fresh, check out [buckscountyfarmfresh.com](http://buckscountyfarmfresh.com).

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