



# FARMER TO FARMER

podcast



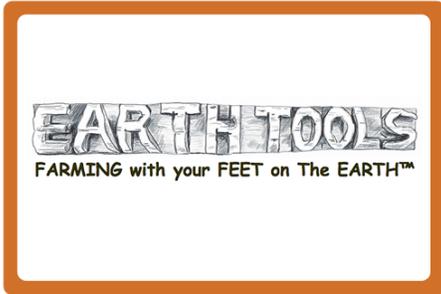
## **EPISODE 132**

### **Laura Davis of Long Life Farm on Soil Mineralization, Farming without Flea Beetles, and Organic Certification**

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**Chris Blanchard:** It's the Farmer to Farmer podcast, episode 132. This is your host Chris Blanchard. Laura Davis farms about two and a quarter acres of vegetables at Long Life Farm in suburban Hopkinton, Massachusetts, with her husband Donald Sutherland. Laura started farming after she was laid off from her 30 year career in the medical device business, and she and Donald farm [00:00:30] full time, selling their produce to a CSA and to two farmer's markets. Laura was attracted to farming through a passion for soil science and has put a lot of effort into remineralizing her soils. We discuss her approach to improving the soil in order to improve her crops and the reduced insect and disease pressure she's seen on her farm as a result. Laura also shares her experience with a recent foray into No Tell Production. Laura is also an organic certification inspector, and we discuss the ways that being a certified organic farm from very early on, fit in the Long Life [00:01:00] Farm's business strategy. Laura also shares her tips for record keeping and staying in your certification agencies and your organic inspector's good graces.



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Laura Davis, welcome to the Farmer to Farmer podcast.

Laura Davis: Well thank you Chris. I'm glad to be here.

Chris Blanchard: Laura, I'd like to start off [00:02:00] like we usually do, by having you tell us about Long Life Farm. Where are you guys located? How are you marketing your produce? How long have you been doing it?

Laura Davis: Oh thanks. We are located in Hopkinton, Mass, which is where the Boston Marathon begins. We have approximately two and a quarter acres that we cultivate, both leased lots, two different locations, but within a mile and a half of our home. We grow for about 90 [00:02:30] families in a CSA and we sell it Saturday and Sunday at farmer's market. We use our home base for all of our seedling growth, and washing vegetables, and packing vegetables, and storing them in the cooler, so that the families can pick them up on pick up day.

Chris Blanchard: Wait, Saturday and Sunday farmer's market, you guys must stay pretty busy.

Laura Davis: Yeah, it's a 24/7 career when the fruits and vegetables start growing. That's the way we've managed it.

Chris Blanchard: If you guys are where the Boston Marathon starts, you're obviously not out deep in the country.

Laura Davis: No, we're about 45 minutes to drive, outside of Boston, it's directly west of the city.

Chris Blanchard: Are you guys in the suburbs?

Laura Davis: We are in a, what we call a bedroom community of Boston. A lot of people live here and take the train in, some drive in, but yes we are a suburb.

Chris Blanchard: You said that you're leasing two lots plus doing some of your production at home there, where are those located relative to where you live?

Laura Davis: We have one lot that's about a quarter mile from our house, and another two acres that is about a mile and a half away. This isn't the bedrock of agriculture in Hopkinton, by any stretch of the imagination. We went on Google Earth to find the open space near us, when we decided to be farmers. I wanted my girls to stay in this school system, because I have two kids in school. Hopkinton has a



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very good school system. We went and asked neighbors if they would let us use their fields for growing vegetables. The first person we called said yes. The second year, about the fifth person we called said yes. We leased two and a quarter acres.

**Chris Blanchard:** What year did you guys get started?

**Laura Davis:** We started in 2011. This is our seventh growing season this year.

**Chris Blanchard:** Congratulations.

**Laura Davis:** Thank you.

**Chris Blanchard:** Starting in 2011, you and your husband Donald, you guys weren't young when you started farming.

**Laura Davis:** No. I had been in a 30-year career myself, in the medical device business. My husband had most recently been a stay at home dad. I was laid off from my job after 30 years. I decided that I needed to start an austerity budget, while I was on unemployment. What I did was, I started taking some soil classes because I knew I couldn't afford my CSA any longer. I met all sorts of interesting people and really got excited about soil chemistry.

**Chris Blanchard:** And jumped from there into farming.

**Laura Davis:** Well we were looking to buy a business at first, as my second act. My goals were really to be near my community, which I hadn't been in my corporate job, where I had to travel globally. I wanted to be able to be near my kids and be able to volunteer at the school, which I'd never been able to do. I wanted to be my own boss. Those were the criteria I was thinking about when I started my own business. Nothing really got me excited. We looked at a couple of businesses to buy and franchises to buy, and my husband finally said, "Why don't you do something you're passionate about?" Be careful what you wish for, because vegetable growing was it. I started, like I said, meeting really interesting and open people. Farmers were very open about helping you and educating you on various techniques. Actually, one of the people that I met at my first soil workshop, hired me as a volunteer shareholder at her farm. I worked for her in the entire season in 2011. That's where I really got some experience.

**Chris Blanchard:** When you guys jumped into this, I mean it's not like you did this while you had another income. How long did it take you to make the farm economically viable?

**Laura Davis:** Well, I would say that we made a little bit of money our first year. That was the whole point of leasing, so as not to go into debt. At our age, we didn't want to have another mortgage or another car payment. We went into it with a small amount of money that we knew we were going to invest in infrastructure. I would say it was about \$25,000. We made about \$5,000 our first year, in terms of net income. Every year since then, we don't make a ton of money, but we certainly bring in between \$25,000 and \$30,000 each [00:07:30] year. With some of the savings that we've put aside, that was really, we believed a successful venture.



- Chris Blanchard:** Is your husband full-time on the farm as well?
- Laura Davis:** He is, yes.
- Chris Blanchard:** How many other employees do you have?
- Laura Davis:** We have one full-time person that works with us April through October. We have one part-time person. She works three days a week. We also take advantage of four different volunteers, who each work with us four hours per week. They work as volunteer shareholders.
- Chris Blanchard:** You mentioned that you were attracted to this because of the soil science side of things.
- Laura Davis:** That's right. I came from a business where outcomes based research was something that we did in order to sell a product. In the medical device business, if we could show an improved outcome for a patient, we would do clinical trials to show that. That's the background I came from. When I learned about putting more nutrition into vegetables, and how the nutrition in vegetables had declined such a great amount since the 1920's, I thought, "Well, wouldn't that be great? To be able to market your vegetables based on higher nutrition." That's how I got hooked on the idea of improving our soil, because we certainly took over some soils that were pretty poor.
- The two acres that we took over were conventionally farmed, and consistently tilled for 30 years. They were pretty worn out. We've been able to improve it quite a bit. It's not an overnight job to improve the soil like that, but over the years that we've been [00:09:30] leasing the land, we've noticed dramatic improvement. Improvement, in terms of less bug pressure, longer shelf life, better quality taste. The plants, actually, are able to resist more stress, whether it be drought or freeze. If they get caught in a freeze and we hadn't covered them up, they're actually able to [00:10:00] resist it because of the quality of their immune systems. Soil science really was, for me, an eye-opening experience, because it's something that we don't know a lot about. We're flying to the moon, but we don't know more than 5% to 10% of what we should know about our soils.
- Chris Blanchard:** Talk to me about the program that you guys used, because you guys came in looking to [00:10:30] grow nutrient dense food. You've got these poor soils that have been farmed conventionally, what was the first thing you did?
- Laura Davis:** The first thing that we did was do a soil report, a soil test, and then look at where the major minerals and trace elements were. We've been mineralizing, and then we put back the minerals that it needed. Things like calcium, and potassium, and sulfur, and many of the [00:11:00] trace elements, like you see in the elemental table, boron, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, silica. These things are traces that our bodies need in parts per million, but if they're not in the soil we can't get them and be healthy. The soil has to have a certain amount of these minerals in traces, in order for the vegetables to have those same minerals in traces, in order for us to be healthy [00:11:30] as humans and animals need it as well.



**Chris Blanchard:** You were really specific and targeted with the kinds of nutrients that you were applying.

**Laura Davis:** We were, yes. We follow the Albrecht model, which Charles Albrecht was a scientist that lived in, was part of Wash U in St. Louis, during the early 1900's.

**Chris Blanchard:** I'm familiar with the Albrecht model to some degree, but can you tell us a little bit more about that?

**Laura Davis:** Well there's [00:12:00] a calculation of soil minerals. The major minerals, there's a percentage of calcium that they want your exchange capacity to be holding, upwards of 65% to 70% calcium. For magnesium, it would be in the 10% to 15% range. Potassium, [00:12:30] in a 2% to 5% range. Then that would be the ideal soil for vegetable growing. Once you get your soils up to that ideal balance in the soil, then your vegetables go through a growth that most people don't know is possible. Instead [00:13:00] of maybe just 10 pounds per tomato plant, you have 50 pounds from your tomato plant. The tomato plant is actually genetically able to produce much, much more than 50 pounds per plant. Those are the types of things that you start seeing, because the plant is making complex carbs and complex proteins, which it wasn't able to do with the limited nutrients in the soil before.

**Chris Blanchard:** Have you guys actually done any testing of the plant tissues, [00:13:30] to see if that nutrient density in the soil is actually translating through into your plants?

**Laura Davis:** We have not yet. My original goal had been to, after five or six years, to test some actual produce and compare it to what the USDA lists on their website, for let's say calcium in a head of broccoli. We haven't done that, just because of the cost of those types of lab [00:14:00] tests, \$500 or \$600 per test. I think that what we do use is a refractometer, which enables us to take the leaf and squeeze the sap out of the leaf, and then measure the fructose in that leaf. You've probably heard of brix, the term brix is used, and that's what it means, is using the refractometer to actually measure out [00:14:30] the exact number that, that sap, or you can use it on fruits or juices from vegetables as well. That gives us a correlation to the nutrient density of that leaf or ...

**Chris Blanchard:** Now is that something that has carried over into your marketing? Do you guys actually advertise your product as being nutrient dense?

**Laura Davis:** We do. As we look at our current business [00:15:00] model, we're completely at full capacity for our farm. The amount of advertising and marketing I've had to do recently, has been minimal, only because we've sold out every year. We have people calling and asking, "Wow. Can you go to this market? Can you go to that market?" We're at capacity for not only our manpower, but also our production. I think [00:15:30] if we were able to expand into a new field, that would be when I would start marketing for the nutrient dense. Yes, we do tell our customers that this is what we're trying to do, to make our vegetables not only taste better, but be more nutritious. Based upon the feedback that they've given us, I think we're getting there. Like I said, it's not an overnight thing that you can do. Most people that are working on their soil fertility [00:16:00] in this manner, tend to work on them at least five years, but going into 10 and 15 even.



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Every year since we've started, we've seen significant improvement, not only in the organic matter, but also in the quality of the vegetables.

**Chris Blanchard:** You talked about yield increases as well. Have you seen dramatic yield increases on the acreage that you're farming?

**Laura Davis:** We have. We get another 5,000 pounds out of the fields [00:16:30] every year, and we haven't increased the acreage that we're farming. We definitely do see increases in yields.

**Chris Blanchard:** When you say you get another 5,000 pounds of produce out of it every year, is it another 5,000, is that an increase that you're seeing year, over year, over year, or is that another 5,000 compared to where you started.

**Laura Davis:** Yeah, so we, our first year we had maybe 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of produce. [00:17:00] Now we're about at 30,000 pounds. We do see a definitive increase every year in our yields.

**Chris Blanchard:** Was all of the land that you started farming on, had that, had all of that been in conventional crops before you started farming it?

**Laura Davis:** All but a quarter acre. It had not been in conventional crops in some time. It had been in hay and been paid [00:17:30] for some time, the farm that we lease from had been a commercial farm about 15 years prior to us starting.

**Chris Blanchard:** I also wanted to ask, just when you were looking at those soil amendments, are you also adding compost and other sources of organic matter, or have you just focused on those calcium and other mineral applications?

**Laura Davis:** We also add compost when we're planting. [00:18:00] We do buy quite a bit of compost and add it. The organic matter in the soil that when we started was around 1.8% to 2%, and right now we're at about almost 6% organic matter. That certainly has helped. We also do plant cover crops, to help grow organic matter as well. Although now we're not [00:18:30] tilling it in as some folks do, we plant cover crops that are winter kill cover crops, so that we don't have to till them in the next year.

**Chris Blanchard:** Got it.

**Laura Davis:** It definitely helps with the fertility in the organic matter.

**Chris Blanchard:** Now with two and a quarter acres, how are you guys managing that? Is this a hand tools operation?

**Laura Davis:** Yes. We originally purchased a BCS and that's how we broke up the sod when we first started. [00:19:00] We did use it for tillage each early season, until this year. This year we tried not to till anything. About 80% of our beds, we were able to plant without tilling this year. We did eventually have to till a couple of beds that were extremely grassy, but that's our goal, is to try to turn over the beds [00:19:30] in the spring, and then for successive plantings, without tilling. We work with all hand tools. We really don't have any mechanization at all.



**Chris Blanchard:** When you talk about planting without tilling, what are you doing to actually get those beds ready for production? I mean you've got to do some sort of loosening of the soil, don't you?

**Laura Davis:** Well, the beds [00:20:00] were already raised from using the BCS in prior years. We would use the rotary plow, which is the birded plow on the back of the BCS, to make our raised beds, so going down one side and then the other side, raises the beds about eight inches. Then we would rake them. In years past, we would prepare the beds, and they have pretty much maintained their permanence there. In the spring, we decided not to till this year at [00:20:30] all, and we pretty much used a wheel hoe and made furrows and planted. This is fairly new to us this year. We think that it's going to, we've already noticed that there is some tightness to the soil when you don't till it. It's not that real soft soil when you're planting. If you have any weeds, they're kind of tight in there too. I will say that the crop [00:21:00] that we've harvested from those beds has been very good. We haven't noticed any decline in our yields for those beds. We have noticed it being a little bit more difficult to weed, but we do hope that by not tilling we're going to have a lot less weeds. We're still new to the no till thing, but we are trying to go in that direction.

**Chris Blanchard:** Is it a significant labor savings for you, not to be going through that bed preparation process?

**Laura Davis:** It is. We also use [00:21:30] a couple of other things that really help in this endeavor, and that is we use a cover pro weed guard, which is a black fabric. It's not a landscape fabric, like you might think of, a thick, plastic, woven thing. It's more like the white row covered fabric, only it's black and it's a lot thicker. We actually, in the spring, if we're not going to plant a few of the beds right away, [00:22:00] like tomato beds or pepper beds, we will put the black fabric on top of the beds and staple it down, and leave it there until we're ready to plant those beds, so that no weeds grow back through the stubble of the old cover crop that has died over the winter.

**Chris Blanchard:** Then you're pulling that fabric off again, before you do that planting.

**Laura Davis:** That's correct. We're pulling it off. Then once it's pulled off, we put one furrow down the middle of the bed, we plant the tomatoes, and [00:22:30] then we put the black fabric back on from plant to plant, so it's really in the walking path now. It's now being, it's being a weed guard for the entire season. We used to use hay for that instead of this black fabric. We do put some hay around the tomato plants to prevent any splash back, because there's still a little bit of dirt showing there. I would say maybe four inches wide all along the bed. We cover that [00:23:00] with hay. It really has been an awesome product for us, because we can put it down each bed in about five minutes. It's a lot cheaper than hay. It also has benefits the second year, when we go back to plant those beds, because we don't have any weeds growing there and there weren't any the prior year.

**Chris Blanchard:** I'm curious now. When you're planting crops like [00:23:30] root crops this year, are your carrots growing okay without loosening the soil prior to planting them?



**Laura Davis:** Yes. Yes, in fact we've harvested a couple of full beds of carrots this year. There was no issue at all with any compaction. We were quite pleased with how the root crops did.

**Chris Blanchard:** Are you doing any sort of a pre-plant weed control, [00:24:00] other than the occultation with the fabric?

**Laura Davis:** If we have a succession coming after a harvest, yes, we will use some occultation with either that same black fabric or we have used clear plastic as well, following what some other farmers have used. We have a gentleman in Connecticut that has taught no till farming in our area, Brian O'Hara from Old Tobacco [00:24:30] Farm in Turnbull, I think it is, Connecticut. He will, so we followed the technique that he uses, which is that after your lettuce is done, you're going to mow it, and then you're going to put the plastic down for 24 to 48 hours, when you have a hot day, at least above 70, 75 degrees. It'll stay there for 24 to 48 hours, and then you'll pull it up, you'll put your new compost down, you'll reseed [00:25:00] the bed or replant the bed, and then water it in. That's pretty much how the bed gets turned over.

**Chris Blanchard:** That seems pretty remarkable to me, that you could do it with that little soil disturbance.

**Laura Davis:** Well, we're trying. I think we'll see next year how it pays off, but we are seeing benefits already this year, just in terms of the amount of the work. Also, just [00:25:30] I mean in the past, we have often just, when we finished a bed we would just put some cover crop on it and let it go until the next year. We're actually getting more usage out of our beds from this technique, because we would not have always replanted every bed that we had.

**Chris Blanchard:** When you're replanting a bed, are you reapplying fertilizers and soil amendments at that point?

**Laura Davis:** Right now, we're just putting down new compost. Sometimes we are using a little bit of Sul-Po-Mag as well, but other than that we're not putting any more minerals [00:26:00] down at that point.

**Chris Blanchard:** What kind of a rate of compost are you putting on your beds?

**Laura Davis:** We're putting on at least two wheelbarrows full on a 100 foot bed, 36 inches wide on the top of the bed.

**Chris Blanchard:** Then, what other tools are you guys using for weed control on your farm?

**Laura Davis:** Well, we do a lot of hoeing. We do a lot of pulling if a bed gets out of hand, [00:26:30] which it can do if we get busy doing other things, which I'm sure everybody has a problem with. We just use hoes and manual hand pulling of weeds.

**Chris Blanchard:** Any particular hoe that you like over another?



- Laura Davis:** I do. I'm particularly fond of the hoes that Johnny sells, the colinear hoes, and the ones that they have in their catalog. There's a little [00:27:00] narrow one that's great for onion beds, that I love. Everybody has their favorite hoe. Most of the employees on our farm use the hula hoe, which I don't prefer.
- Chris Blanchard:** I've never really understood the appeal of the hula hoe, because the moment you grab that thing and start using it, your back's hunched over.
- Laura Davis:** Yeah, and they're too short. All of the Johnny's hoes have longer handles, and it's great. I mean I'm not that tall, but [00:27:30] it seems to work a lot better, when you have a longer handle.
- Chris Blanchard:** You know there's enough of vegetable farming that happens with your butt up in the air, that it's nice to be able to do something while you're standing up straight.
- Laura Davis:** Exactly. Exactly.
- Chris Blanchard:** You guys are selling through a CSA, and then through two farmer's markets. About what percentage of sales is going to CSA, and what percentage to the farmer's market?
- Laura Davis:** We have about 60%, 65% going [00:28:00] to the CSA. Then the rest of it going to the farmer's market.
- Chris Blanchard:** I'm curious, you guys aren't doing any wholesale or restaurant sales, which seems to be a pretty common thing to do for farms of your size. Is there a reason that you haven't gone down that road?
- Laura Davis:** It's really just been capacity. We do have one restaurant client in our own hometown here. It's a Thai restaurant. They buy, they just buy Thai basil [00:28:30] from us, which is actually a nice little account. They buy five pounds a week, which is a lot when you're talking about Thai basil. They will also buy anything we have extra, like carrots, and cucumbers, and peppers. We haven't really gone out to look for new clients, just because we've, I don't have enough production for them.
- Chris Blanchard:** You just haven't needed to.
- Laura Davis:** Right.
- Chris Blanchard:** Haven't had any interest in shifting away from the farmer's market?
- Laura Davis:** [00:29:00] You know, I think it would definitely clear up our weekends and give us a little bit more, probably a little more free time, but I find that ... I am also the manager of the Hopkinton Farmer's Market, so I do find that to be a great asset being there, as being part of the community, and really meeting neighbors, and meeting new residents in town, and so forth. For me, it's really [00:29:30] more than just the sales side of the farmer's market.



- Chris Blanchard:** We've talked to a lot of people, I'm thinking of JM Fortier, or Ray Tyler, or Curtis Stone, on the podcast, who are doing these small scale intensive market farms. Typically, they're marketing through higher end outlets, sometimes farmer's markets, sometimes restaurants, but rarely through a CSA, simply because of the dollar value of the crops that they're growing and kind of how they're ... [00:30:00] It's hard to justify making room for winter squash in a small market garden. Are you growing that kind of a diversity of crops for the CSA?
- Laura Davis:** We grow just about everything you could imagine, except for corn and okra. When people come to a CSA, that's one of the expectations, is that you have a good diversity of produce and so forth. I think that's what they expect when [00:30:30] they look at having a CSA, to experience the seasons and eat what's in season all the way through from June through October. For us, it's actually worked out very well. We try to grow things that they can't get at the grocery store. We do grow butternut squash, that's probably a bad example, but we also grow a lot of things that they might not get at the grocery store, like purple beans or we sell a lot of yellow [00:31:00] beans instead of green beans, or yellow snap beans instead of the green snap beans, or purple broccoli instead of the green broccoli. We try and keep it interesting.
- Chris Blanchard:** You said you're not having to do a lot of marketing for your CSA, you must have a pretty good retention rate.
- Laura Davis:** I think we're probably about similar to what other farm's do on CSA. I think the national average is about 50%, and I think we're around 65%. We [00:31:30] get a lot of people back every year. I think that's just the nature of the CSA, people don't know what they're getting into if they haven't experienced it before, and sometimes can overload on veggies.
- Chris Blanchard:** Talk to me a little bit more about your land situation. You said you've got two parcels of land, and then you've also got your greenhouse and your storage facility at home, right?
- Laura Davis:** We have a small seedling greenhouse at home and [00:32:00] storage facility, we call it the two car barn. We have a walk-in cooler and we have a small perennial herb garden here, on our home lot. Then we have a 72 foot greenhouse at our small lot, which is a quarter mile away. The one at our home base is [00:32:30] largely used for seedlings and drying onions, and that sort of thing.
- Chris Blanchard:** Are you transporting the produce all back home, in order to pack it and prepare it for market?
- Laura Davis:** We are. We don't have potable water at either field, so we definitely have to do that. People pick up here anyway.
- Chris Blanchard:** That's got to be kind of interesting for your neighbors.
- Laura Davis:** They don't seem to mind it much. Our neighborhood is [00:33:00] wooded and forested, we don't have sidewalks, and there are a lot of boulders. It is a bit rural



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looking, even though we're in the suburbs. I don't think there's been any issue with the neighbors anyway.

**Chris Blanchard:** Have you had to make many changes to your two car garage to make it a suitable place to pack produce?

**Laura Davis:** We actually don't pack it in the garage. We set up, [00:33:30] we set up tents and wash under tents, and then they come down and go to the farmer's market, so it's a virtual washstand.

**Chris Blanchard:** Your storing the crops, do you have a walk-in cooler?

**Laura Davis:** We do, yup. We have a shed that we have designed with a CoolBot device inside. It works great for bringing the temperature of your produce down and keeping your produce at the right temperature.

**Chris Blanchard:** [00:34:00] What day are you doing your CSA distributions?

**Laura Davis:** We do it on Tuesday and Fridays. Fridays, we also harvest for our Saturday market. It's a big day on Friday.

**Chris Blanchard:** Okay. You're not storing a lot of produce for an extensive period of time?

**Laura Davis:** No. In fact, everything we harvested today will go today, and be picked up today. On Friday, we have CSA members pick up their shares, and then it goes to the market on Saturday at 8:00 AM, so most of it sells. Then [00:34:30] for our Sunday market, we harvest on Sunday morning.

**Chris Blanchard:** When you say that everything you picked today is going to go today, we'll just mention that we're recording this interview on a Tuesday, even though it's going to come out on a Thursday morning.

**Laura Davis:** Right, that's right.

**Chris Blanchard:** That's the CSA pickup day for you. I just wanted to make ... It's different to be you and me, than it is to be somebody listening to the show. Okay. I'm always curious, one of the biggest challenges that we had on our farm with the washing and packing, was just dealing with the water. You [00:35:00] said you've got potable water there at home, but what are you doing with the waste water? How are you guys managing that, and all of the mud and dirt that comes off of produce when you're cleaning it.

**Laura Davis:** It actually goes into our woods. It goes downhill into our woods.

**Chris Blanchard:** Nice. That's an easy solution.

**Laura Davis:** Yes.

**Chris Blanchard:** You mentioned that your crops over the years have become more resistant to pests. I'm assuming that this is something that you guys have actually observed [00:35:30] on your farm. You're not just saying the things that you read in the



book about nutrient dense farming. You've seen these changes happen in your operation?

- Laura Davis:** We definitely have. The bugs can't digest the plant material when it gets to a certain point of this growth cycle. We've noticed that, at least at our small field we've had for a full seven years, [00:36:00] we've mineralized it for six. The larger field, our landlord actually sold some of our land, and we had to start on a new place on his farm, but we've been on this particular field for now our third season. We haven't seen those changes as much as we have on the field that we've been mineralizing for six. We definitely have seen a huge impact, [00:36:30] where on one field things were frozen, on the other field they weren't and they should have been, based upon what we've seen there in the past with freezing. We definitely have noticed a difference. The shelf life is the amazing thing too, where sometimes you get stuff home from the grocery store, it lasts less than a week, sometimes only two or three days before it starts rotting. I'm talking about lettuce and other greens. We'll have them in the refrigerator for several weeks and they're still completely fresh looking. It's definitely something that we're noticing a difference with.
- Chris Blanchard:** That's really great. [00:37:00] It's got to be really rewarding to see those kinds of changes.
- Laura Davis:** It is, definitely.
- Chris Blanchard:** Have you seen a difference in the attractiveness to insect pests? Has that changed how you guys are managing insect pests on your farm?
- Laura Davis:** We have seen a difference in the way that certain things will chew on the plants. The only thing we haven't really seen a big [00:37:30] change in is things like cabbage loopers. Those are still a bit of a nemesis. In terms of other, like flea beetles and those sorts of bugs, we've definitely seen a big reduction.
- Chris Blanchard:** Wow. Growing vegetables without flea beetles could actually be kind of fun.
- Laura Davis:** It is. In fact, our full-time employee cannot believe that she's working on this farm and she's never seen anything like it. [00:38:00] Although, she's worried, so she still covers things. It's like, "You know, if we leave it open, it's not going to be the end of the world. We just don't have that much pressure anymore with flea beetles."
- Chris Blanchard:** I think that's fantastic, and not the normal trajectory on a vegetable farm.
- Laura Davis:** Right, right.
- Chris Blanchard:** What are you guys doing for pest control when necessary? Are you guys ... Now you guys are a certified organic farm, are you spraying, handpicking, what kinds of controls do you use?
- Laura Davis:** We do a lot of [00:38:30] handpicking, especially with potatoes. We don't use anything on our potatoes, although sometimes you think we should look into it, because potatoes can be an issue. It seems like we had a lot of green growth and we definitely kept ahead of it with the handpicking. We do use things like



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DiPel or cabbage worms and cabbage loopers. We have not really used much else besides that [00:39:00] this year. That's been really the extent of it, is DiPel.

**Chris Blanchard:** Laura, with that, I think this is a good time for us to stop for a couple of minutes, take a break, get a word from our sponsors, and then we'll be right back with Laura Davis from Long Life Farm in Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

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Alright, and we're back with Laura Davis from Long Life Farm in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. I stumble over that name a little bit. [00:41:30] A lot of small farms forego organic certification. You've embraced that wholeheartedly, there at Long Life Farm, and in the rest of your life as well.

**Laura Davis:** That's right. I felt it was really important to certify when we were new farmers. My husband didn't feel the same way, but I sort of insisted. Our groceries that we buy are mostly all certified organic. We're probably 90, I would say 90% of what we consume is certified organic. [00:42:00] We live our lives that way, and I really believe that our business should be that way as well. Since I, the woman



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that I had worked for my first year on her farm, was the Executive, is still the Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association in Massachusetts. Having worked on a certified organic farm, I felt it was very doable, especially since we were leasing land that had not had anything prohibited sprayed on it in many, many years. We were [00:42:30] able to gain certification and market our vegetables as certified organic, the third season I guess it was.

The important thing there is, when you're a brand new farm, how do you get people to take a risk on you? They don't know if you can farm. They don't know what you're doing, in terms of your practices. Seeing the USDA organic label on our sign, definitely gave people confidence in the fact that they could trust us [00:43:00] to feed their family. That was very important as brand new farmers. It definitely has made a difference. People come to us to buy certified organic, and they know what that stands for, not only just in terms of the lack of chemicals, but the fact that we are stewards of the land and that we're trying to make that soil better. It was very important to us as we got started.

**Chris Blanchard:** You've also done work with NOFA [00:43:30] Massachusetts. NOFA being the Northeastern Organic Farming Association, Massachusetts, the NOFA Massachusetts being of course the state branch of that. You've done work with them as an organic certification assistance coordinator, right?

**Laura Davis:** That's correct. It's funny how that started, because when I was going through, trying to get my farm certified, I was participating with NOFA as a board member at that time. I was sitting in a board meeting and I said to them, I said, "Listen, I need some help with this. I'm stuck [00:44:00] on these questions. I'm not really sure how to proceed. There's nobody here at NOFA to help me. What's the deal?" I couldn't believe it. Be careful what you wish for, because then all of a sudden you become the organic certification assistance coordinator, and this role was born in 2015. We worked in concert with Bay State Organic Certifiers, to get a grant.

The USDA [00:44:30] was looking for partners in putting together marketing materials to promote certified organic. Between Bay State and NOFA, we put together a proposal that enabled us to work with some farms and help them with their paperwork, and we set up a basis of how this would all work. It worked so great, the first year we got [00:45:00] 15 farms on board, that I helped to get certified in 2015. Every year since then, we've had about eight new farms that have come to me for help. Bay State continues to have record numbers each year of new applicants that are wanting to be certified. Even though on the national level, the organics has taken some hits, in terms of good people, trust there, and its [00:45:30] integrity, when it comes to small farms, I think people really do trust the organic label.

**Chris Blanchard:** Well, and I think it's an important point there, is that the problems that we have with certified organic operations and fraud, I believe, really are focused on the larger operations and sort of the corporate organic agriculture. Where, I really think that when you're dealing with small farmers, a lot of times it really is a mark of integrity, [00:46:00] and an assurance of kind of, that you're doing that extra 10% above and beyond just being a sustainable farmer, that you're actually taking those extra steps. I think that's a really nice reassurance for



customers. There's always two complaints from small growers about organic certification. One is the cost, and the other's the paperwork. With the cost, [00:46:30] there's the organic certification cost share, which can do a pretty significant job of defraying those expenses, but then on the paperwork side, that's primarily where you're doing your work, right?

Laura Davis:

That's right. I would say that, well paperwork is something that all small businesses have to do, regardless of whether you're certified organic. Most of it, I would say 80% of that paperwork [00:47:00] are records that you would need for certification. I don't think that the record keeping is that onerous. Some people just are not record keeping types. We all know there are those of us out there that are not great at paperwork, and maybe you have an employee do it for you, if you're one of those folks. I would say that the record keeping requirements for organic certification are not prohibitive [00:47:30] by any stretch. If you set them up your first year, and you keep your harvest records, and you keep your productions records, all farmers are keeping those anyway, that's really, and they all have to keep records of their insecticide use anyway. All of these things that conventional farmers do, they're very similar in terms of what records you keep. It would be similar if you were going to be certified organic.

Chris Blanchard:

[00:48:00] Tell me how you help people get their paperwork together.

Laura Davis:

Well I work with them in a couple different ways. If they're computer savvy and they feel comfortable in starting, I will generally get them the forms that they need in order to put their organic farm plan together. I let them know that, I usually give them about an hour of consultation, just [00:48:30] to get them going, just in terms of strategy, "Okay, tell me about your land. Has anything prohibitive been used on it that you know of? How long have you owned it? Is it newly acquired? Is it leased?" A few questions to get them moving in the right direction. If you're just starting off, the most important thing to do is check everything that you're applying. You don't want to put anything down that might be prohibitive, so checking that is, double checking that. I can help them with that as well. I can look things up, tell [00:49:00] them if it's approved or restricted, and how they have to handle that. Oftentimes people that are pretty savvy computer wise, they can do it, do their applications on a computer form and then just call me or email me when they get stuck on certain questions. That happens because sometimes it's worded differently than they may know, "Tell me about your weed management strategy. Tell me about your insect management strategy." "Well, what do they want me to say?" [00:49:30] These are normal questions that I get.

Then other people, who may be a little bit older and are not computer literate, I have often sat down with them and filled out the forms. It kind of just depends upon the person, and what type of help they need. Lastly, if somebody feels really confident, runs through all the paperwork, I offer them to look at their dossier before they submit it, and make sure that everything is, [00:50:00] there's no questions that they've created by filling out things a certain way. Bay State was so happy with these types of working relationships and the farms that I helped, that they asked me to train to be an organic inspector. The year that we worked on the 15 farms, they just felt that those dossiers were in such great shape and they were so well organized when they got them, that they had to do



a lot less work [00:50:30] before they sent that form over to an inspector to schedule an inspection. It was really a win/win, both for the farmers and for NOFA, as well as Bay State Organic Certifiers.

**Chris Blanchard:** What was it about those forms and about the work that you were doing with the farmers, that helped those dossiers to be more organized? To help that organic farm plan to really, to shine, and to make things easier for the certifier? [00:51:00] When you're able to put in a good application that's really complete, I mean it makes your certifier job easier, but it also reduces the amount of time that you have to spend with the inspector on your farm. That's a big deal for both time and expense that's required. What is it that you were doing with the farmers that helped with that? What made the difference?

**Laura Davis:** Well, completeness of a question and answer is really important. Most people that fill out an application [00:51:30] don't understand that what they're looking for, let's DiPel, they'll go down the list of their insect products that they use, they'll say DiPel and they'll say that it's an approved product. Then they won't fill in the last cell of the form. The last cell is, "What are you doing ..." This is not how it's worded, it's called an annotation, "What are you doing before you use DiPel [00:52:00] as a cultural practice?" You need to list those things out there. I look at it and I say, "DiPel is not an approved product, it's a restricted product." These are things that people make mistakes on, as a standard mistake every single time I see a new applicant. Once they understand what's supposed to go in that chart, then it's easy, but no one [00:52:30] knows it unless they've been taught that. It's just, more completeness is what Bay State liked. They didn't have to call the applicant to ask a lot of questions about what they meant or why that wasn't filled in. If a question, if they didn't know an answer to a question and they left it blank, that's not a good thing. You have to have everything filled in. Just somebody looking over those applications was a huge plus for both the farmer applicant [00:53:00] and the certifier.

**Chris Blanchard:** I think it's one of the frustrating things, for me, about filling out an organic certification application. I've been doing these since, I think about 1998, on my own. A lot of times it feels like a test. It feels like, and sometimes like when you were in high school or college and the professor would ask questions and they would be intentionally vague, to see if you actually knew what you were talking about, [00:53:30] and I find that to be a really frustrating aspect of filling out a farm plan. Like you said, when you have that last column after DiPel, you know it's a restricted product, you're not supposed to use it unless you're already, unless your cultural controls have failed, so then you're supposed to list what you're doing for the cultural controls. Wow, I mean it's like, "Well of course I'm doing some cultural controls. I add fertility, I monitor for the insects, I don't just spray on a calendar." There's like a lot of that stuff that seems really obvious, but they need you to say it.

**Laura Davis:** They need you to say it, and they need you to write it in there. The job, once your organic farm plan is approved and you're certified organic, the job of the inspector then is to come out and have you say it again, to verify everything that you've written down. I think the customer can really feel confident that the farmer is doing what he's saying he's doing, because it's being, [00:54:30] this is what the inspector does, he verifies everything in your plan, and may go over every single thing in your plan and ask you again, just to make sure that's your



practice. That's what it's all about, is making sure that the farmer is doing what he or she is saying they're doing.

**Chris Blanchard:** You were doing this work before you became an organic inspector. What was it in your experience that helped you to know what answers farmers needed to be putting on their organic farm plan questionnaire.

**Laura Davis:** [00:55:00] Bay State spent quite a bit of time training me. We sat through a good two weeks, off and on, of training, and then asking me to fill out a form, whether it be the livestock form, or whether it be the crop farm form, or the poultry forms. Then we went over them. Every single question, we went over them and over them. The great thing about [00:55:30] me helping farmers is that, even when I get stuck because I don't know all the answers and things do change, I'm able to call them and ask them what this means. The farmer can't do that because Bay State is not supposed to consult with them. They're in a very unique relationship. They're the certifier, they can't consult with the farmer. I can consult with the farmer and I can consult with Bay State, so that I can help that farmer. It's [00:56:00] a really great way to be able to give this type of assistance to farmers that want to apply.

**Chris Blanchard:** Now, you've also gone through the organic certification inspection training.

**Laura Davis:** Yes.

**Chris Blanchard:** Can you tell me about what that process was like?

**Laura Davis:** Yes. That's a week long intensive program that's put on by the International Organic Inspector Association, IOIA. [00:56:30] My class was made up of about 30 people, and I would say half of them were farmers, not all crop farmers, but some livestock farmers as well. We had lots of workshops, and instruction, and seminars, as part of this whole thing. At the end of that training, we actually had to do a mock inspection of a farm, that was a real certified [00:57:00] organic farm. Then we were, we either, then we had to take a test, an exam, and it was about a four hour exam. We had to get a certain grade in order to pass the test.

**Chris Blanchard:** Then are you actively inspecting farms?

**Laura Davis:** I am. I do one inspection every week. I take a half day off the farm, to [00:57:30] go to another farm nearby, usually within an hour's drive, to an inspection. I can't do anything more than that, just because I don't have time, but what I love about it is that I see what everybody else is doing. I get lots of great ideas and I come back either with vegetable envy or not, depending upon what the farm is doing. I certainly learn [00:58:00] an awful lot from the other farmers that I inspect. I start April 1st, and then I go through mid-October, and I do just one a week.

**Chris Blanchard:** I've always said that one of the best things you can do as a farmer is to go see other people's farms. What a great way to be able to do that.

**Laura Davis:** Absolutely. I love it. I just love that part. It does give me a little bit of a clearer perspective, when I get back to my own farm and say, "Hey, it's not that bad," or, "It's not that great," [00:58:30] or whatever.



**Chris Blanchard:** When you're doing the organic certification inspections, what are the most common mistakes that you see, that people are making with regards to their organic certification.

**Laura Davis:** Well, I would say that the one thing that stands out often is that they don't have their record available for me to look at. Not that they're not keeping the record, but let's just say that I'm there early in the year and they don't have [00:59:00] their prior year records with them. That's a regulation, that they have to make records available to the inspector when the inspector is there. Very often, their office is in their home. Their file box is someplace else, besides the pickup truck, that's pretty standard. They might have a journal book that they keep of their records, but they don't keep the prior year's available. That's probably one of the [00:59:30] things I see very often, and it's not a non-conformance as non-conformances go, but it's something that people definitely need to keep in mind. They need to have records available for the inspector, so that they can ensure that they're doing what they say they're doing.

**Chris Blanchard:** When you say that, what you're talking about is not that they don't have the records somewhere on the farm, but that they have to spend a bunch of time actually getting them for you.

**Laura Davis:** Or maybe [01:00:00] they're five miles away, and that's not something I'm going to ask them to go get. They're supposed to have them with them.

**Chris Blanchard:** What are some other common mistakes that you see when it comes to inspection time?

**Laura Davis:** I would say that often, a new product that a farm decides to use, is not on the organic farm plan. Let's just say they have a recommendation from another farmer or they're at a conference and they see somebody selling something, and they say, "Yeah, I'm going to try it," and they bring it back to [01:00:30] their farm and they use it without consulting with their certifier, which is, oftentimes does not result in a problem, but it can. I was working with a farm, not on the inspection side, but actually helping a farmer get a certification, and limestone seems very simple to buy, but if you buy the wrong limestone, you can [01:01:00] be declined for certification, which in this case this woman was, because she used a limestone that was prohibited. It had the wrong, it had some processing type of products in it, so it was not able to be used, but she'd already put it down. Those types of things are really critical.

Inputs are extremely critical, and you don't want a farmer to get in trouble and lost three years for applying something that they shouldn't have. A certifier [01:01:30] is great to work with, you just have to send them a note or pick up the phone and say, "Hey, I want to use this. It's not on my farm plan. Could you add it, because I'm going to go ahead and use it? Is that okay?" It might take you a minute to do that. That's something that people don't do.

**Chris Blanchard:** I guess depending on your farm and your marketing situation, I mean if you guys lost your organic certification, well you've lost your organic certification, but you can still sell to all the markets that you're selling to, but if you're in the



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wholesale marketplace and you lose your organic certification, [01:02:00] you're done.

Laura Davis: That's right.

Chris Blanchard: Really, just with anything that you're going to apply on your farm, pick up the phone and call your certifier, and verify that it's acceptable for use.

Laura Davis: Exactly. When in doubt, call them up.

Chris Blanchard: It sounds like maybe even when you're not in doubt. I mean if you're just going, limestone's limestone, right? Until it isn't.

Laura Davis: That's right. Exactly.

Chris Blanchard: What else do you see on farms?

Laura Davis: I would say those are two of the main things. [01:02:30] Oftentimes, they don't really think through this cultural practice requirement, and they will use products that are approved for organic use, but they're not really, they're not really doing the things. They're using it even before they have to. In other words, maybe their spacing wasn't correct, in terms of planting. Maybe they've just [01:03:00] got too many weeds in the field and it's causing a lot of bug pressure. Maybe they're not looking at varieties that are disease resistant. I think those are big things. Another big, big thing is that many certifiers haven't really come down on farms when they're not using organic seed. I would say that most of the new farms that I inspect are somewhere between 85% and 95% organic seed, for all their [01:03:30] seedlings, but there are many farms out there that are 30%, 40%, 50% organic seeds. They don't look for new varieties to change to, because they haven't really been pressured to. I see that in mostly older farms, that have been certified for a very long time.

Chris Blanchard: I mean you haven't been inspecting very long, but are you seeing a change in how certifiers are approaching [01:04:00] questions like the organic seed requirement?

Laura Davis: I am seeing a little bit. I'd like to see more. I'd like to see certifiers actually put more pressure on these farms to really try harder to trial new varieties. That's one of the questions we ask a farm, if they are at a low percentage of organic seed, is what organic varieties are you trialing? [01:04:30] If they don't tell me there's any they're trialing, then I will write that on their exit report, saying, "Hey, you need to be trying more organic varieties." In general, it's a very, it's a light type of leniency that they're given.

Chris Blanchard: Of course, you've seen a lot of different record keeping systems on farms. If you're inspecting one a week and you've been doing that for a couple of years, have [01:05:00] you seen any magic bullet solutions to doing the record keeping?

Laura Davis: I really haven't. Everybody uses something different. You'll see some people using record keeping software, COG Pro or some others. Most people that I've seen that are keeping good records, are just using Excel sheets that they've



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created or that they've pulled from [01:05:30] other farms. I see a lot of just binders and portfolios, just with handwritten notes, which is totally fine. I would say that those that are really able to tell you what their yields are, that really do look at trying to improve what they're doing on efficiencies, they're keeping track of a lot of different things, and they're keeping spreadsheets. I [01:06:00] wouldn't say that's common, but you see it more and more.

You mentioned a couple of things, cost and paperwork. You addressed the cost of, and for small farms I think that the cost is extremely limited. For a farm our size, our revenues are around \$45,000 to \$50,000, and for our farm our fee, after [01:06:30] the cost share, is about \$250. It's really a very reasonable thing to do to give customers that extra confidence. Again, the paperwork is something that they're going to have to do anyway, as a farm and as a small business.

**Chris Blanchard:** Sometimes organic farmers will say things like, "Well, being certified organic makes me a better farmer." Have you found that to be the case?

**Laura Davis:** I think it definitely keeps you on [01:07:00] track. I think it definitely makes you do things that you wouldn't ordinarily do, like look at your harvest records after your year and see how you can improve that. If I wasn't certified organic, I may or may not be keeping harvest records. I mean I wasn't keeping harvest records when they came to inspect me my first year, but that had to change, that was part of the deal. [01:07:30] They came back to see me a second time my first year, to make sure I was keeping those records. That has made me a better farmer, keeping the better records, for sure.

**Chris Blanchard:** Now Laura, you mentioned that you were on the board for NOFA Mass. If I remember right, that's actually something that happened very early in your farming career, right?

**Laura Davis:** Yes. When I finished my first year with Many Hands Organic Farm, Julie had asked me if I would like to get involved [01:08:00] with NOFA. At that time, I joined as a member of the board and I was the, worked on a couple of their committees, finance and personnel. As you're with NOFA, your role definitely evolves. I became the Treasurer of the organization, and headed up the finance committee, and most recently, last December, our current President had left and I was voted in to be the President of the board [01:08:30] at NOFA. It's a great organization. It's an organization that educates and advocates for organic food. The Executive Director's been there over 30 years, and it's been a very consistent organization. It's a great group to be a part of, it really is. They really do try to help farmers and gardeners and landscapers, to live an organic life. [01:09:00] It's been a great association, as far as I'm concerned. I enjoy being a part of it.

**Chris Blanchard:** Thank you for doing that work. I served on the board of MOSES, the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, for, I mean I don't even know how long, 12, 13 years, and was President for a couple of years early on. I know how much work goes into that, but I also know how important it is to have people who are willing to serve in that role, so thank you for doing that.



Laura Davis: [01:09:30] It's been my pleasure. Yes, it is a lot of work, but it's mostly a pleasure too.

Chris Blanchard: With that Laura, I'd like to turn to our lightning round.

Laura Davis: Okay.

Chris Blanchard: First, we're going to get a quick word from one more sponsor.

This lightning round, as well as perennial support for the Farmer to Farmer podcast, is provided by BCS America. BCS two wheeled tractors are often mistaken for just a rototiller, but they are truly a superior piece of farming equipment. Engineered and built in Italy, where small farms [01:10:00] are a way of life, BCS tractors are built to standards of quality and durability expected of real agricultural equipment, the kind of dependability that every farm needs. I've worked with BCS tractors for over 24 years, and I wouldn't consider anything else for my small tractor needs. I'm not the only fan. More than 1.5 million people in 50 countries, have discovered the advantages of owning Europe's most popular two wheeled tractor. These really are small tractors, with the kinds of features found on their four wheeled cousins and a wide array of equipment, power harrows, rotary [01:10:30] plows, flail mowers, snow throwers, sickle bar mowers, chippers, log splitters, and more. Check out [BCSAmerica.com](http://BCSAmerica.com), to see photos and videos of BCS in action. [BCSAmerica.com](http://BCSAmerica.com).

Laura Davis, what's your favorite tool on the farm?

Laura Davis: I would say that it has to be the old crank. The old crank is a device that was invented by an employee's husband, that rolls up our [01:11:00] weed guard at the end of the season. It's an awesome tool.

Chris Blanchard: This is something that you guys have made at home. Tell me what it looks like.

Laura Davis: It's got a couple of sawhorses and a handle with some wooden wheels. In the middle, is a PVC pipe that's about three inches in diameter, and we are able to roll up all of the [01:11:30] black fabric we use throughout the farm, which is substantial. It's probably, I would say, 65% or 70% of our acreage, is covered with this black fabric in the walking paths.

Chris Blanchard: When you put that fabric away for storage, how do you keep the mice out of it?

Laura Davis: The mice haven't been a problem with that. They love row cover, but it hasn't been a problem with the mice at all, surprisingly.

Chris Blanchard: What's your favorite resource? Where do you turn when you need information about what to do on your farm?

Laura Davis: Oh boy, that's a good question. Well, I love Veg Notes, that's put out by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. That's an awesome newsletter. We get it once a week in our mailbox, and it tells us what's happening out there and what to be wary of or what to start. Just some great ideas, like planting scallions for your fall crops, which I'd never done, so I thought, "Okay. We'll try that. That



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sounds great." Normally, if I have a problem, you do your share of Google searches, but I would say Sarah has a lot of great, E-Organic has some great webinars. I have definitely referred people to the Row Dale Organic Farming training, if they're interested in looking at organic and they don't really know what it's all about. [01:13:00] Certainly the NOFA website has got all these archived workshops and tape recordings of some wonderful farmers and speakers. It's a great resource.

Chris Blanchard: What's your favorite crop to grow?

Laura Davis: Garlic. Definitely garlic, because you can plant it in the fall, and mulch it with straw, and walk away until scape time. Love that. Then harvesting is easy, [01:13:30] it's just, everybody loves it, and the aroma is just so wonderful. People are picking up their shares, and seeing it dry in the greenhouse.

Chris Blanchard: What would Donald say is your farming superpower?

Laura Davis: Well it was really my vision and I know he will say that he's a mere employee here. It's really putting it all together and putting [01:14:00] all the pieces together, which I have done. Just the coordination and the management and the vision. I know there's a lot of skills there, but it's amazing to me that what we have today wasn't here six years ago.

Chris Blanchard: I really like that. Finally, if you could go back in time and tell your beginning farmer self one thing, what would it be?

Laura Davis: Well, [01:14:30] it probably would have been, "Buy the tractor with the front loader," for sure. So many times when we're just pushing the wheelbarrow or lifting things, as you mentioned early on, we're not spring chickens. My husband had a new knee put in last December. He's going to get the other one done this December. We should have just bit the bullet and bought an old used tractor with a front loader. At least it would have been a helpful thing, to be able to make compost, to be able [01:15:00] to deliver the compost to the beds, and yeah, that would have been it.

Chris Blanchard: Laura Davis, thank you so much for being part of the Farmer to Farmer podcast today.

Laura Davis: Thank you Chris. I really enjoyed it, and I appreciate the invitation to do so.

Chris Blanchard: Alright, so wrapping things up here, I'll say again that this is episode number 132 of the Farmer to Farmer podcast. You can find the notes for this show at [Farmertofarmerpodcast.com](http://Farmertofarmerpodcast.com), by looking on the episodes page or just searching for Davis. That's D-A- [01:15:30] V-I-S.

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Thank you for listening. Be safe out there and keep the tractor running.