



FARMER TO FARMER

podcast



EPISODE 129

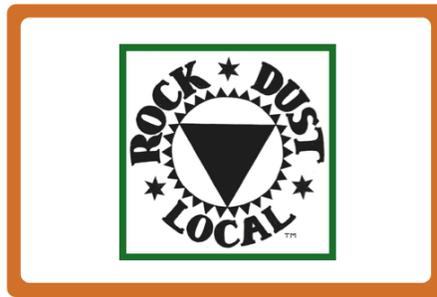
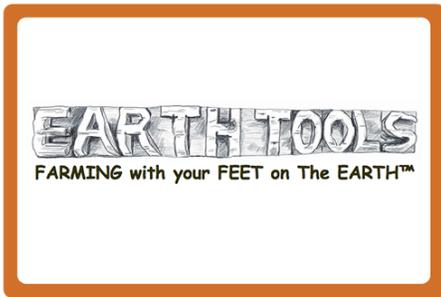
Chris Jagger of Blue Fox Farm on Scaling Up, Scaling Down, and Where Organic and Local Farming is Going from Here

July 27, 2017



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Chris Blanchard: It's the Farmer to Farmer Podcast, episode 129, and this is your host Chris Blanchard.

My guest today, Chris Jagger, is the owner and operator of Blue Fox Farm, an organic vegetable farm in the Applegate Valley of Southern Oregon. He's also the owner and head consultant for Blue Fox Agricultural Services, a full-service agricultural supply and consultation company focusing on ecological situations for the modern farmer. Both his farm and his agricultural services use living soils as a foundation to scale farming operations efficiently and profitably. We discuss the changes Chris has seen in the organic and local marketplace and labor environment, and how Blue Fox Farm has worked to downsize in response to those changes. Chris shares how he has worked to determine what makes money with a sensible approach to crop budget analysis.

We also dig into how Blue Fox Farm is getting better crops on a smaller piece of land, the economics of scaling up and scaling down, salad mix production, and the mechanization and the choices that Blue Fox Farm has made around that.



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It's worth noting here that Chris rounds out his involvement with the agricultural community by hosting the Living Soils Symposium each March. The Symposium is an interactive conference for farmers interested in regenerative farming techniques to exchange knowledge and gain insight in a peer-to-peer environment.

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Chris Jagger, welcome to the Farmer to Farmer Podcast.

- Chris Jagger: Thanks for having me, Chris.
- Chris Blanchard: I'd like to start off today like we usually do by having you tell us about Blue Fox Farm, they're in Applegate, Oregon. How many acres are you farming, what are things like in Applegate, what kind of crops you growing, and how are you selling them?
- Chris Jagger: Yeah, so my wife Melanie, and I have been here for, this is our 15th season here. We have about 40 acres that we manage. We started at one acre, and we worked our way. This year, actually we're farming considerably less acreage, about 12.5 acres. We grow a range, like so many folks doing what we're doing, we grow a range of just about everything except for the stuff that doesn't make us any money. Pretty much an A to Z, we start in March and usually go through almost Christmas time. We have two properties that we farm on. We have our home property where everything is propagated, and then about five miles away, we have all of our growing acreage so we have 15 acres over there, another piece that we lease that's 17, and another piece that's six. So that's kind of the overview of what we're up to. Then we sell at a local area farmers market wholesale to some of the co-ops around the area, restaurants. Then we do some wholesale distribution through a regional distribution company.
- Chris Blanchard: When you say you do some wholesale distribution, you're selling to a wholesale distributor? You're not doing the distribution yourself, right?
- Chris Jagger: Correct, yes exactly.
- Chris Blanchard: You just listed a lot more than 12 and a half acres of rental ground for your vegetables, why so much ground relative to the 12 and a half acres that you said you're actually farming in vegetables this year.
- Chris Jagger: Yeah, so that's a pretty long discussion, I guess in some respects. We've been up to about 37 acres in actual production, that was about three years ago. We're



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seeing the overall landscape change as far as labor availability, market access, just the coming of age of organics. So we've tapered back over the last couple of years to a more manageable level that we can get the size of crew that we need to support it. Luckily we have a lot of tools of mechanization that we bought over the years as we were scaled up bigger, that allows us to work these smaller acreages more effectively, and more efficiently now. That's kind of a nice advantage of having been a little bit bigger, and now we're scaling back, but we still have all these bigger scale tools available to us.

Chris Blanchard: So American business would say that if you're not growing, you're dying. Are you guys dying, or are you making smart choices about getting smaller?

Chris Jagger: Well I think that's debatable, and to be seen. I think that there's a massive shift happening right now in our agricultural and food-based systems. I think organics has been insulated from it, somewhat, for a long time. Now, as we see organics coming of age, we're seeing a lot of consolidation happening, a lot of bigger ... Like the big box store mentality jumping into organics. There is a disparity now between the economy of scale that makes sense to be successful anymore, like being very small scale, and being very large scale, there's these two areas that you can find success and profitability. Then there's this dead zone in between. There's always been a dead zone in between, but we're just seeing that dead zone widen a little bit.

We're kind of on one of those edges right now, and we're trying to assess exactly how we're going to approach this into the future. As you probably know, and so many of your listeners know, it's one of those things that, as we're trying to figure out what the next step is, you have to keep going, you have to keep farming as well. It's been a very calculated move to scale back. We've seen all of these changes coming over the last three or four years, and we didn't want to just wait and get the carpet pulled out from underneath us. We've made these adjustments on the fly as we've been going. We're doing okay right now, but really our biggest challenge being labor anymore. That we just kind of watch it unfold day-to-day, and make adjustments on the fly. That's kind of how you have to roll.

Chris Blanchard: That labor is a really hard nut to crack, especially in an area like the one that you're in. You guys are located kind of between Grant's Pass and Medford, down in Southern Oregon, so kind of just north of the California state line. But Medford's a mid-size city, Grant's Pass isn't huge either, what is your source of labor in that area?

Chris Jagger: Well it's changed throughout the years. When we first started farming the world of internships were still very strong. My wife and I both started as interns on farms in California and Colorado. So we kind of followed course, once we started our farm we worked with the intern world a lot through ATTRA. At that time, that was the early stages of the strength of the internet. People were still mailing in applications and there was that whole process of finding an internship on a farm. As time went on, we found that there started being some labor disputes, not with us, but with other farms here on the west coast. Kind of started looking at the legality of internships. That was a real eye-opener for the agricultural community out here.



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Instead of just waiting to, again, get the carpet pulled out from underneath us, we started looking at well, maybe that's not the right way to go. So we started looking into hiring labor. That came down to just putting the word out, word of mouth. There's always been a migrant labor workforce that passes through this area because of the orchards and vineyards. So we tapped into that network somewhat. So we just kind of found whatever would work. We're just starting to see those access points for labor kind of drying up now. Whether it's the work ethic of our younger folks in our country that are shifting away from wanting to do the work that we do, the minimum wages going up, so people are finding other jobs that are easier, that are paying much better. Because we're not subject to all the same laws, as far as other industries are with labor.

Honestly, we're seeing a lot of the migrant workforce getting drawn into other realms. A lot of folks that .. Like the Latin based community, a lot of them are actually going back to their home countries now. So we saw a large egress of those folks. We had people that were working with us that were from Mexico and elsewhere. A lot of them just went back because they had been here for four generations, and they said, "We've saved enough money, I think we're going to go back home now." I totally understand that. A lot of combination of all those things are definitely putting a damper on the labor force.

Chris Blanchard: Those are some really interesting dynamics that you're talking about, that don't really have anything to do with whether or not you guys are good employers.

Chris Jagger: Totally, yeah. You know, we've always thought of ourselves as being pretty sharp-minded about what we were doing. I mean we definitely got into this for an ideal, and an ethical and moral approach to farming. You also have to approach all of that with sustainability of economics in mind. We always knew we had to be good business owners, and good planners, and good record-keepers. You can do all of those things perfectly, but there are some variables that just are out of our control, and labor is one of those, in some respects. We just had to learn how to adapt. There's definitely some evenings that we're scratching our heads and saying, "Man, what are we going to do here?" The answer maybe isn't immediately apparent. Yeah, it's a very interesting time.

Chris Blanchard: As you shrunk the farm from 40 acres down to 12 and a half acres of vegetable production, has that been a process of just shrinking the amount of everything that you grow, or have you guys been cutting crops, and trying to focus more on the crops that are bringing you lots of dollars? How have you gone about that process?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, that's exactly what we've done is not just ... We haven't just shrunk the whole farm down, we've definitely adapted what crops we're growing. I live for marketing, I love marketing because it's a real illustration of what our culture is doing, as far as you say to the marketplace, "Hey, this is what I have to offer." They respond back with, "Yes, we want it." Or, "No, we don't." So I pay a lot of attention to that. Over the years at farmer's markets, when I'm retailing, or wholesaling to our retailers, I just see what the marketplace wants. We've adapted the crops that are making good returns for us, crops that don't take excessive amount of labor, like hand labor, whatever we can do with any of the



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machines that we have, we focus on that. Then we have looked at expanding into value-added markets.

Something that we've done that a lot of other farms probably haven't done is we've looked at value-added markets that we don't process the vegetables into that value-added product, we just supply the vegetables to other friends or business associates, that are doing the value-added ourselves. That really cuts back on our cost. One example is we have a hot sauce company that is based out of a restaurant in our area. Their demand for classically fermented hot sauce just keeps growing exponentially every year. We've found a way to grow the peppers and hot peppers on scale. We don't spend a lot of time trellising. Then the neat thing that we do is I have the hot sauce company employees and business owners, they come in and they actually do the picking of the peppers for us.

We grow the peppers, they come in and pick them, and then there's no culls, because they know exactly what they want for their hot sauce. They come in and pick all the peppers that they need, and then process them. Then I sell them the peppers for a discounted rate, and then I'm also paying their labor as they're out in the field. It's kind of a win/win situation, and we've found that that really makes things a lot more efficient, as far as the bottom line goes. Ideas like that is what we're looking at. We don't want to get defeated by the change of agriculture, but we want to be creative, and that's what we are. Farmers are living artists as far as I'm concerned. We're making art on the fly, so we just look at these things and say how can we adapt? That's one of those examples of what we're doing.

Chris Blanchard: Talking about shrinking the farm, choosing crops to grow where the market is there, have you also ... You mentioned earlier that you don't grow veg that doesn't make you guys money. How are you determining what makes you money, and what doesn't?

Chris Jagger: You know, it's a classic crop budget analysis. Just crunching the numbers. We have a system that gives us a baseline. The classic problem with crop budget analysis is it works great whenever you have one or two crops, because it's really easy to figure out all your fixed costs, and then your variable costs. Whenever you're growing 35 to 60 crops, it's always really challenging. It's like, well how do I equate all this? Over the years we've kind of come up with a baseline number for all of those fixed costs. We put that into our formula when we're calculating it. It's not perfect, but every time we run the numbers, it always comes out and seems pretty darn accurate to us. We kind of have that baseline that we have that involves the transplant cost and all that.

Then the other costs that are crop specific, then we dial those in. We just kind of look at those numbers and see how it pans out. Something else that we take into account that probably doesn't fit into that crop budget analysis is the emotional sustainability of our workers. We used to grow tons of strawberries, and every time that we got to the strawberries we knew that our margins were getting tighter and tighter each year. But every time that we would go to pick strawberries I could just see the morale of our crew just hank, just dip all the way down. I started looking at it, and I was like, "Man, is it really worth having



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my crew be really upset?" Not necessarily at me, but just at what we were doing, and just have them be drained. Is it really worth that?

We always put that into ... It's probably not formula based, but we put that into ... When we're trying to figure out whether the crops are going to continue with us, we put that into play as well. It's just like how does the crew feel about it? Like are people amped about it? Peppers can be somewhat labor intensive, but everybody that's picking them, especially because it's the hot sauce company that's picking them, they live for peppers. So their morale is always very high. That's we weigh and balance what we're going to do with our crops.

Chris Blanchard: What kind of record keeping are you doing to support that crop specific cost analysis?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so we have ... We're spreadsheet maniacs. We do as much as we can with spreadsheets, but we're also not out there taking data points for every single thing we do. We've been at this for ... Melanie and I have been farming together for about 20 years now, so we kind of know the process, and know the flow. We consolidated from about five spreadsheets down to one now. It's just materials in, and materials out kind of information. It's all looped into our harvest records that we have. It also really ... Having these consolidated records has made our certification process, like when we're getting inspected, a lot easier, because there's a lot of data on one sheet. That's the main way we track all this info.

Then also something else that we've implemented in the last couple of years that works really well, is we have a email account setup that's just all of our record keeping that we do on the farm. So anybody that works here on the farm and has information that is of value, whether it's crop observations, or harvest data, or what we've sprayed on the fields as far as amendments, or crop protectants, or any of that kind of stuff, I just have any of the folks just email that address directly. Then we just have everything there, so at the end of the year when I go in and I'm trying to build out my amendment application sheet for my inspector, all the information is there, and it's all organized by date. So that's been really helpful to track all of that info. Almost everybody has a Smartphone now on the farm, and so you can send an email from anywhere.

Chris Blanchard: That would be a different address from the email address that I emailed you at to set up this interview. This is something that's dedicated just for a record-keeping space?

Chris Jagger: Exactly, yes. It's just a Gmail address that anybody ... I've had other farms do the same thing. I was like, "Yeah, just call it record-keeping, your name of your farm, @gmail.com, or something like that." Just something that everybody in-house knows what it is. That's just solely for that, and nothing else.

Chris Blanchard: You said that you and Melanie have been farming together for 20 years, but you started farming at Blue Fox Farm in 2003. What was your background prior to coming and starting Blue Fox Farm?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so Melanie and I started farming in Santa Cruz in 1997. She was at the UCSC studying agroecology. I had just come out of Alaska in the fish industry, and we both had this strong desire to figure out where our food came from. So



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once we met, we kind of realized that we were on this similar path, and as she was finishing up her studies at UCSC we were like, "Well we want to keep doing this, how are we going to figure this out?" We worked for the Molino Creek Collective, which they were some of the first folks that had dry farm tomatoes. We worked with Joe at Dirty Girls Farm for a bit, helping him out when he was first getting going.

Then we both went the full season internship route. We ended up out in Colorado, she was interning on a farm called Guidestone Farm. They were one of the first legal raw milk dairies in Colorado, a membership- based program, and she was interning on the CFA garden space there. Then I worked for a farm that was about 30 miles south of there called PachaMama Organic Farm, that was in Longmont. We both worked there for a season, and then went back to California for a year to ... I built homes for a year just to save up some money. Then we were both offered a management position at Guidestone. So she and I went back out to Guidestone and managed their garden space for another two seasons and got married there.

That was kind of how we got our management chops, working on farms. Then at that point, we were married in 2002, and then we came out here and tried to figure out what we were going to do here. Then bought our property in 2003.

Chris Blanchard: What brought you to Southern Oregon?

Chris Jagger: Happen chance, I think. I don't really know. We still aren't really sure how we ended up out here. It was one of those things that we were looking to buy land on the western slope of Colorado, but it was kind of out of our price range. Melanie's dad had a friend that works down in Los Angeles that had mentioned about retiring up to Medford. She and I had been through the Ashland area in our travels over the years, up and down the west coast. That area looked pretty cool, and then we kind of started investigating the Applegate Valley. It was a lot more affordable at that point in time. We really analyzed what markets were here. Not just the farmers markets, but the overall market place, and said is there a place for us to fit in here? Talked with a lot of the elder farmers here and said, "Can we fit in here, does it make sense for us to come in?" Everybody was like, "Yes, please come here. We need more farmers."

So it just kind of fell into place, and finding a property even then was challenging, because of all the constraints that we needed. We found this neat old dairy that was priced unbelievably well. Something that people always ask me is how did you pull this off? You're poor young farmers, how are you going to buy this place? The only way that we could have done it was the fact that Melanie's parents helped us out. They put the down-payment on the property, and I will be eternally grateful to them for doing that. They looked at it this way, they said, "Someday whenever we pass on, we're going to leave you inheritance of part of our estate, or whatever. But at that point in your life, hopefully you don't need it. So why don't we put that money down now, and help you guys get on this path of farming that you're so passionate about?"

I've always thought that that was amazing that they were able to do that for us. Because they saw our vision of what we were trying to accomplish. So they put that down payment, and that was just what we needed to be able to then start



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from the ground up. We honestly did. We saved money while we were managing Guidestone's garden, and saved enough for our first tractor, and got out here. It was shoestring, it was just Melanie and I when we just started, and we were doing everything. Watering, planting, harvesting, doing markets. Get up at three in the morning to start irrigation before we had to go to the market. It was real shoestring. We just started building and making sure that we were just paying as we went. We never took out loans, other than our mortgage. Just worked within our means, it was really important to us.

Chris Blanchard: Were you both full-time on the farm from day one?

Chris Jagger: The first season, no. The first season I was actually building my brother-in-law's house. Melanie's sister and her sister's husband, they share this property with us as well. So it is a true family affair. They're not in farming, but they're supportive of what we're doing. So I was building their house for them. That was kind of a neat thing where they had sold their house in San Diego, and then the profits from that went to me to build their house, which then gave me money to put into the farm to get things going. The first year I both farmed, and built their house. Then Melanie and our good friend came out and ran the small garden space. I think we had an acre and a half, or two acres that first year.

Then the next year I said, "Man, I just have to take the leap, the leap of faith and just do this." We have saved enough capital to make sure we had our cost covered for, I think it was about six months. Regardless of what happened with the farm, we knew we were covered for six months. That gave us a six month window to just really put the work in.

Chris Blanchard: Then how quickly did you guys scale up? You said one acre in your first year, that seems like a pretty reasonable sized market farm for getting started, especially with the kind of experience that you guys were bringing to it. Then how quickly did you scale up to that 40 acres?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so each subsequent year it went one, four, seven, 12, and then we were at 12 for two or three years. Then, when we bought our production piece, and there were some other leases that we had that we don't farm at all anymore. Once we bought our production piece, then we were at 15 for another year, something like that, and then it was a pretty drastic jump. Once we got to 15 then I think the following two or three years we were above 20 acres in production. Then we maxed out at 37 acres in actual production, and we there for a year or two. Then we started tapering back because the marketplace kind of changed rapidly. It was mostly based on our wholesale experience. There were some big box stores that moved into the area, and kind of swooped some business from our distributor. It kind of changed the game really quickly.

I would say it was a gradual increase, then we kind of got to this maintained level in the 20 to 30 acre range. Then we kind of peeked out for a single year. If it had kept going I don't know if we would have scaled up more, but I think we would have kept at that 35 to 40 acres. That was a nice scale to be at. It was a big crew, I think we had 17 people on staff that year, with some of that being part-time folks. We probably had seven full-time people that year, something like that.



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- Chris Blanchard: When that marketplace shifted did that happen while you had crops in the ground?
- Chris Jagger: Yes.
- Chris Blanchard: Were you left with stuff out in the field?
- Chris Jagger: Yeah, we were. Yes. Some of it I worked hard to find other outlets for it. Some of it I just tilled under. I am not an opponent of tilling crops under, because I'm always feeding the soil back anyway. What I've always said is we're feeding our soil, and vegetables just happen to be a by-product that allows us to continue feeding our soil. I'm okay with doing that. I think that some of the reason that we've been able to do things like that, is because we don't have a lot of debt looming over our heads. Other than our mortgage we pretty much own everything, because we've paid as we've gone. So that gave us the flexibility to just say well, you know, the marketplace isn't there, so let's turn this under. We don't need to be managing this crop at this point. That's what you do.
- Chris Blanchard: You bought production land that was five miles down the road, right?
- Chris Jagger: Right.
- Chris Blanchard: Okay, so I farmed land that was at a distant from my home farm, and that's hard.
- Chris Jagger: Yeah, it can be. What we learned quickly was I made sure that anything I needed, both at home or at the other farm, I had one of each at each spot. Here at home, because this was basically just where our propagation houses were, and not really any production, that made it pretty easy to do that. I kind of looked at it as I had to go home at the end of the day, and that was a good thing. We have two kids, we have two boys, they're nine and seven. So I make an effort to get out of there by 5:00 or 5:30 each day. I learned really quickly to just let go of having to have everything be perfect and dialed in.
- As you know, and everybody knows, that there's always a list of things to do on the farm, and it'll still be there in the morning. Of course I didn't let the time sensitive stuff get swept under the carpet, but there's always things that can be done later. We just figured it out, and it's made me become a better farm manager too, because if I had a really loose system over there, I don't think it would be able to maintain with me being at home over here. Which has been the perspective that I've taken on it, and it hasn't really been too bad.
- Chris Blanchard: When you say that you didn't have a loose system over there, I'm going to assume you had a tight system. What did that tight system look like? Was that a system of observation? Was it a system of record-keeping? Was it just a system of having a way that things work?
- Chris Jagger: Basically I worked hard to come up with SOPs, or standard operating procedures for how the farm works. It's just you take the framework of the farm, and you reverse engineer it. You say this is the end result that I'm trying to get, how am I going to get back to square one from the end result? Every step of the way you



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just build that out as far as, okay with my irrigation ... You take each aspect of the farm and you break it down. So irrigation is a really good one, so irrigation is all on timers, and irrigation also is how we do a lot of our fertility management through Mazzi injectors into the system. We don't have a lot of walking through the fields and spraying crops for foliar sprays. We inject it into our irrigation system. Just efficiencies like that make the system work really well.

Having timers on everything, that's one aspect. I use the internet to my advantage a lot. Having like a security camera on the thermometer for the walk-in cooler so I can look at what the walk-in cooler's doing from a distance. Just little ideas like that I just try to implement as many systems as I could to have redundancies so things wouldn't fail. Or if they did fail I would know about it, and just go back over. Then organizing our barn system and our wash and pack system into an efficient space. Just having everything have its own home. If you mentioned all this to any of the folks that have worked with me in the past, some people would laugh because they would say, well there are days when you look in there and you're like, oh my gosh, everything's in a state of disarray. Underneath it all there is a framework that's there supporting it, that you can kind of reorganize and clean up at the end of the day, and start anew.

It's systems management, that's really what farming is, and it's something that I'm always really excited about, figuring out how to manage these systems in holistic manners that work for everybody.

Chris Blanchard: It sounds like you've got the packing shed, and your cooling facility, those are on the remote farm, in the production space?

Chris Jagger: Yup. Pretty much everything is over at the production farm, except for our propagation houses. The only reason the propagation houses are still here, is because that's my wife's realm. She's always taking care of the management of the propagation greenhouses. She's here at home with our boys, and so it was just a way for her to keep touch with what's going on. Then she does all the office work here too, out of our home office. It kind of worked well to keep it at that. If we were ever to hand that side of things off to say our farm manager, or somebody else on the farm, then we'd probably consider moving the propagation houses over to the other farm as well.

Chris Blanchard: Again, you've talked about shrinking the farm, that still leaves a lot of land that you're not managing in vegetables. What are you doing with the rest of that land? Have you incorporated it into your vegetable rotation?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so a lot of cover cropping. A lot of bare/fallow, a lot of trying to knock down the weed seed bank. Our fields were dairy pasturing land for years, so as you know, cows are awesome processors of green matter, but they also pass a lot of weed seeds through. There is a large weed seed bank out there, so that's something that we've had to manage over the years, and trying to figure out how to do that. That's through cover crop management, and just bare/fallow management. Yeah, it's really nice actually to have more space to be able to work with. We're kind of spreading some of our beds out too. If there's a section that we want more airflow for something to say control powdery mildew, or downy mildew management, you can put space between the beds. Where it used to be we'd have to cram everything in there.



There's a lot of things that we used to do three rows to a bed, that we're doing one or two rows to a bed now. In some respects we're learning that we're getting better crops out of the fields by not just trying to have that high density planting. It's neat to see how these changes, I mean you can look at the down-scaling as like a, "Oh man, this is a total bummer." But I've really looked at it as what can we learn from this, and what can we gain from this? What can we do to become better farmers because of this? I think that just having all this space really is pretty awesome.

Chris Blanchard: Tell me a little bit about the climate there in Applegate, Oregon.

Chris Jagger: It's somewhat similar to Colorado. It's somewhat of a semi-arid desert. We get around 30 inches of rain a year in a good year, I think more normal is probably 17 to 20. This last year we had, I don't know how much we had, but we had a ton, which was great. All that rain comes in the off-season. Most of that rain is from November through say April. During the summertime you never have rain, you're solely dependent on your irrigation out of the river that runs by the farm. Daytime temperatures range in the middle of the summer, like right now we're in the low to mid-90s, we'll definitely move up into the 100s every once in a while. It's rare that we'll hit over a 100 for more than three or four days, but it can happen.

Then the humidity here is very low. That means the night-times cool of considerably, so that's really nice too. From a crop-growth standpoint, it's funny, people up north in the northern part of Oregon are always surprised because they can get certain crops before we can. They're like, "You're so much further south." I'm like, "Well yeah, but you have so much more humidity, your night-time temperatures don't dip, so your plants don't really stop growing." Ours will definitely ... They stall out at night, and then they start back up again in the morning. Just the way that the climate is here, it gives us amazing control over our crops. There's a lot of seed producers around here, small scale seed producers, and that's one of the reasons why they're so successful, is because they can control the irrigation fully.

The latitude that we're at has this angle of incidence, for whatever reason, things just grow like bonkers here. We just get massive growth. Once we get to that sweet spot in the late, or early summer I guess actually, usually by June 15th. It's June 15th to August 15th, you put anything in the ground and it grows so fast, it's amazing. That's really nice, because you can roll succession after succession of things through, and just have a constant supply for your marketplaces.

Chris Blanchard: Chris, with that were going to stop, take a break, get a word from a couple of sponsors. Then we'll be right back with Chris Jagger from Blue Fox Farm in Southern Oregon.

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All right, and we're back with Chris Jagger from Blue Fox Farm in Applegate Oregon. So Chris, you talked about that you guys have done a lot of mechanization on your farm. In part because you grew up to such a large size that you scaled up the equipment that you needed to do that. Now you've still got it, now that you're running at 12 and a half acres. I want to talk some about what you've mechanized, and how that's gone. I'm curious if you were targeting a 12 and a half acre farm, would you have the degree of mechanization that you have now? Could you have afforded that and would it still make sense if you hadn't invested in it when you were scaling up, to a larger scale than where you're at?

Chris Jagger:

Yeah, I think that's a really good question. You know I talked about not being in debt, and how important that was for us to pay as we have gone. That was something that we did because of where the industry was at that time when we got into it. Now, if I was to get into it today, 2017, if I was 21 years old again, our world and our economy and our agricultural system have all changed. I think that if I was to do it all over again, I probably would take some loans out, I would make sure that I had a marketplace before I did that, but I would take some loans out, and I probably would mechanize from the get-go.

If somebody asked me what should I do. I would say, "Here's a punch list of the tools that you need, let's think of a system and a timeframe that you can buy



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those in to the farm." I just think that mechanization is honestly the key, even on a small-scale. A lot of that comes from the fact that I just don't think that the labor pool is there for us, or is going to be there for a lot of other folks in the future. As much as you can figure out how to mechanize, I think that that's a real advantage. I think that a lot of people are scared of mechanizing, because they feel that it takes away from the artisanship of this craft. I really feel like when you mechanize, it allows you to spend more time with the most important thing, which is the crops.

As we mechanize I was like, "Man, I have so much more time now to walk the fields. To do crop walks, to do crop observations." It just refocused where my energies went. Instead of just being out there and being like, "Man, I've got to get this bed of carrots weeded by hand today." I was out in the field walking around saying, "Oops, I've got some aphid pressure here." Or I've got this pressure there, or we need to harvest this next week. I definitely would mechanize.

Chris Blanchard: Where did you guys start with mechanization?

Chris Jagger: With mechanization we started with the classic ACG, the Allis-Chalmers G tractor. We actually were one of the first to use the electrical conversion. We don't have that tractor with us anymore, because we actually scaled up to a level that it didn't really work for us to keep with the electric tractor. We needed more hours in the field than it can give us. We started with an ACG and a basket weeder, and a sweep, and just really built up from there. Then we got a Farmall Super A that we got some finger weeders for. The finger weeder story is kind of an interesting one, that was before finger weeders were really seen here in the US. It was the early days of YouTube, and I just happened to be searching all around for tools and equipment.

I saw this company Kress out of Europe. I actually used Google translate at that time to order them directly from Germany, which was always a little terrifying. Like I'm wiring this money to this unknown company in Germany, let's hope they show up. Eight weeks later, there they were. We used the finger weeders. Then honestly, the game changer for us has been flame weeding. Not a walk behind flame weeder, but a tractor mounted flame weeder that we built in-house. We use the Red Dragon burners, the liquid propane burners. Once we got the flame weeding stale-bed prep down, that was the game changer for us. That cut our labor cost by 35, 40% as far as hand-labor cost. That was the big one for us.

Chris Blanchard: Just simply because you eliminated the hand weeding?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, exactly.

Chris Blanchard: It looks like you guys do a lot of salad mix production, can you tell me about the system that you're using for that?

Chris Jagger: Sure. It's been pretty standard in all the years that we've been here. We've changed the varieties over the years, and kind of fine-tuned those. We do a five row system, we plant, or we seed every week. Over the years we've gone from planting in blocks, which we would do each variety was in its own block. You'd



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have a block of red, and then a block of the green leaves, and then a block of the Tango, or the Lola Rosa, or whatever. Then you'd have this icy green block. Then a few years ago we realized that it was a lot more efficient to just plant in rows. Now we have 10 varieties of lettuces and greens, and we plant those in two beds that each bed has five rows to it.

So each row is a different variety. We've never done the premixed salad mix seed, just because if we have disease or there's certain varieties that cucumber beetles love over others. When we saw that we would have the premix, it's really hard to cut around that. So it's nice if you have the specific varieties in their own row. Then if you have that row that's no good anymore, you can just skip it and go onto another one. As far as harvesting goes, we have tried everything under the sun, and we are back to knife harvesting everything. We do a cut and cut again, kind of process. We'll generally get three to four cuts off of a succession. Sometimes more, sometimes less.

We definitely don't grow baby greens, we grow what we call adolescent greens. We let them get a little bit better. We feel like they have better flavor, they don't just taste like watery vegetable matter. They've got better flavor and it just allows us to cut longer. We've sold bulk salad mix, we've sold clam shells. We've sold it to farmers' markets, pre-bagged, and bulk, and all that. Now we're kind of to the point that we're just selling bulk salad mix at the farmers' markets and the local grocery stores.

That really is due to the fact that the big, organic salad mix producers have really pushed hard to drop their prices down. To the point that they're on a scale that they can sell it out on the floor for basically what we'd have to wholesale it for to make any money. We've definitely scaled back on our salad mix production, because we're up against that big box mentality now. We still pride ourselves on having a good quality mix.

Chris Blanchard: It is such a hard thing when you think about how the organic industry has developed, and those specialty crops like salad mix that used to be the province of smaller growers, you know when I worked at Harmony Valley Farm here in Wisconsin in 1993, we were selling salad mix wholesale for \$6 a pound. I think that when I buy salad mix at retail at the food co-op now, I think I pay \$7. There's nothing else that I can think of that has undergone, or has failed to undergo a similar inflationary pressure. The prices have stayed the same forever. Or if not, gone down.

Chris Jagger: Yup, and it's so interesting to see that food is still the cheapest thing that we have going. It's one of those most challenging things where you have customers that will balk at a 25c difference, yet still pay \$5 for a latte. I mean I'll pay \$5 for a latte too, but it's so interesting to see that the base of our nutrition is something that doesn't have more value to it. I haven't been able to figure out how to change that, and I'm not sure that's a ... That's a whole other show right there.

Chris Blanchard: Yeah, if not a whole other years worth of shows. That's just ... It's like it's so fundamental. The funny thing is Chris, and I don't know if you experience this, but sometimes I'll be in the store and I'll go ... It'll be some product, and organic stuff, and I'm like, "I'm not going to pay that for the organic." Then I'm like,



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"Wait, wait, wait, this is me that I'm talking about here, I'm going to pay that." I sometimes have some price shock too, and I'm a true believe, I've been in the industry for 25 years, almost all my life now.

Chris Jagger: Yeah, it's really interesting, you know? It's one of those things too that ... Something that I moved onto is what is that next step? We've worked so hard to get the organic industry to the point of where it's no longer an infant, it's now a teenager, I guess. How do we take that consumer education to that whole next level? I believe that nutrient-dense crops and high-brix crops, all those kind of things, but man that's a whole other realm of education. It feels like people are just starting to understand organics, and we're going to hit them with okay, now you have to learn this whole world too. It's a big challenge, and I'm really curious to see how things develop over the next 10 to 15 years for food in our country.

Chris Blanchard: I noticed on your Instagram feed that you guys are using a Yeoman's plow, or a key line plow for your primary tillage. Would you tell me about how you go about your tillage and bed shaping? Are you guys on a raised bed system there?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so that's another thing that has evolved over the years. Our main setup goes like this, if we take it from a cover crop standpoint, like let's say we have an over-wintered cover crop. Oats and peas is usually what we do in the winter. It's up around four to six feet tall by the time we're ready to take it down. We generally will flail mow that, and then depending on the field, we will use a moldboard plow. I know that sometimes is a curse word in the world of soil fertility, but it's again one of those things. It's not the tool, it's how you use it. We've always really focused a lot on using the moldboard to go just below the root zone of the cover crop, and not down into the substrata layers of soil.

So we'll just flip that top layer onto itself, let that break down. Then we'll go through and disk the ground. Once the ground is disked and ready to roll we'll usually go through with the Yeomans plow. We have a Yeomans plow that has three shanks, but we generally only use two shanks on it. We will rip as deep as we can, we can usually get down to about 20 to 22 inches. We use a pretty high horsepower tractor for that. We will usually rip the field, and we generally rip right over where our beds are going to be, so that half of the Yeoman ... The Yeomans plow is set up on the same spacing that we're going to be setting up, which is the four-foot bed top. We'll rip where the beds are going to be, and then we go through and we pre-lift the beds with a bed-shaper that we built in-house.

The bed-shaper is basically kind of a evolution of design off of I think originally Jim Leak, who used to be at UC Santa Cruz, he had this bed recycler which was basically a three-point disk that then had some extra sweeps and disk tillers involved into it, and then a shaper on the back. We kind of designed our own system for that. We'll use that to pre-lift the beds. Then we go through and irrigate that whole area, if we need to, depending on the time of year. That will get that initial weed seed flush to come up, and then we'll come back and shape the beds with the bed- shaper as well. Then do another light irrigation to get that second weed flush to come up. The when that second weed flush comes up we'll go through and flame weed those beds. Then ideally then you plant into it, whether it's direct seed or transplant the next day.



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The bed-shaper does make a raised bed for us, it's about probably, depending on the soil conditions, between six and nine inch raised bed. Once we got our raised bed system down, man that's made our cultivation with the tractors so much easier, because when you have a raised bed you have that much more clearance, or ... I don't know how you'd say that, like more rise and fall with the implements to fine tune how much soil you're moving, and how aggressive your leading action is. That's our basic system.

Chris Blanchard: Once you've got the beds made, and you've done your pre-emergent weed control, how are you doing the seeding or the transplanting so that you make sure that those things are nice and centered on the top of the bed?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, so the bed-shaper on the back we have the shaping pan, and it has three very simple fingers coming off the back that mark where our rows are. So we have a three-row system. Whether we're planting one, two, or three rows, there's always three marks there on the top of the bed, and those are spaced 16 inches apart. Direct seeding we still do it the old-fashioned way. We push a Jang, or an Earthway seeder ... Really like the Jang seeder, but there are certain crops that I just can't effectively seed with it, so we still use the Earthway, even though it's kind of the bane of everybody's existence for whatever reason. I'm hoping that Earthway aren't one of your sponsors?

Chris Blanchard: No, they're not. No, and it's a \$79 seeder, right? You get what you pay for.

Chris Jagger: Yeah, exactly. But it works, it does well. We custom fabricated plates for that for specific crops that we need. We direct seed with those two seeders. I've looked into getting tractor mounted seeders. If we had stayed at a higher acreage I would have definitely bought a vacuum seeder at some point in time. That works for us, and then we have a waterwheel transplanter. It's a three-row waterwheel transplanter, like a rain flow. We transplant everything with that. We have three seats on the back, even though a lot of times we only use the two, and just have people switch off planting that third row. Yeah, once we got the waterwheel transplanter that was another one of those, oh my gosh, why didn't we do that earlier, kind of thing.

The amount of wear and tear on our crew's bodies that that's helped to save, was amazing. Just how always being hunched over out there, and it's just so much more efficient, and people are so much happier to be able to just transplant off the seats in the back.

Chris Blanchard: When we got a waterwheel transplanter at Rock Spring Farm I was a little disappointed at first, because it didn't actually make us faster at transplanting. When we took the ... You've got the driver and a spotter behind, and then the people riding on the machine, we could actually transplant by hand, just as fast as we could with the waterwheel. What we discovered was, the big difference, was that at the end of the day, people were exhausted, they were ready to go do it again the next day.

Chris Jagger: Yup, and that's one of those hidden costs that I think that we don't always look at as farmers, because we're just looking at the hard cost. It's like man I put so much value in human resource management, because without people you've



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got nothing. It's just you. Those are the little details that I've observed, and we've made adjustments over the years, is like how can we help our crew be healthier, and better, and more efficient, and effective at what they do, and still be smiling and happy at the end of the day? That's huge.

Chris Blanchard: That was actually something that attracted me, when somebody made the recommendation to get you on the show, that person says that not only is he a great talker, but he gets himself and his crew home at a reasonable hour every day. It struck me, that obviously speaks to a whole set of values. How do you go about that? That's a really open-ended question, but I'm just going to say it, how do you go about that?

Chris Jagger: Just making sure that we get people home well? It comes down to knowing the workload, you know? I think that a lot of farmers are gluttons for punishment, and we love plants. So we always think we should plant more. I've really paid attention to if we plant this much more, is it really going to make us that much more money? So that's one of the biggest things, is making sure that we're just not planting more to plant more, because I've seen it whenever we've taken it that extra step, and you just see the crew, the morale just shift. I've found too that over the years, yeah, you can be out there for 17 hours a day, but you're going to have people burnout. We have people burnout, whether we're out there eight hours or 17 hours.

We just have to be mindful of who the workforce is. Even if we don't like where the workforce is going overall with work ethics, because that's something that I hear from a lot of farmer friends, and I feel the same thing, where like are we just getting to be crotchety old farmers? Or is the workforce's work ethic changing? I really think the workforce's ethic is changing, and it's due to a slew of things. Whether that's right or not, you still have to make adjustments according to that. Whether you like it or not, you have to say this is what I'm working with, how can I do it to make sure that these people are healthy and happy? That doesn't mean that you're not going to have bad days, and it's not going to sometimes just suck. That's the reality of it too. That's life and that's farming, is that you have the ups and downs.

It's just really paying attention to where people's energy levels are. The other thing is that I think my crew knows that anything that they do is something that I would also do myself. I make sure that even if I can't always be out there, I make sure that I am out there some. So like right now, we have a pretty small crew, and I'm still the one that's cutting all the head lettuce every harvest day. Even though I've got a million other things I could be doing, and I could train one of the folks to cut head lettuce, it's something that I know that I can say, it's a tedious job because we've in the heat of the summer, so a lot of the lettuces will bolt. A lot of them will get tip-burn, or whatever. So you really have to pay attention.

I think it's more efficient for me to just cut it, but it's also a sign to my crew of like, "Hey, I'm out there still. I'm out there lugging boxes and crates out of the field, just like you." I think that really goes a long way. I think that makes people respect you. It's not like I'm doing it just for show either. I'm doing it because I got to get the product out of the field. Those kind of little things they make a huge difference.



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Chris Blanchard: You talked a couple of times about observing, and managing the energy level of your crew. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

Chris Jagger: Sure. A lot of my farming ethic, or farming structure, comes from a background and an interest in permaculture based systems. I think the term permaculture gets thrown around a lot very loosely. Really, it comes down to a way to manage systems holistically. A lot of times people think that that's just managing physical systems holistically, like how are you going to get your cows from point A to point B in a holistic manner? Or how are you going to cut down on your carbon footprint to make sure that the system is more regenerative, and all of that. I'm really more intrigued in the humanistic and social aspect of permaculture. Like how can we holistically manage people? That means taking into account that every human is an individual, and that it's not just a number.

So you look at Joe or Sally and say, "What are their strengths, and what are their individual weaknesses? How can I plug them into the right place here on the farm?" The other side of that is I try to make sure that I keep my emotions out of that decision making. That's something that I've not always been good at, but I'm getting better over the years. By that, I mean I try to look at people's strengths and weaknesses, plug them in where they are, and then know that if they don't like that, that they're going to have to trust that I'm putting them in that role for a reason, because I've assessed it from my standpoint.

Now, I still mess up sometimes, and that's something else that I'm really open to, is saying, "I messed up, I should have put you over here." Just looking at the nuances of human beings, because that's the one thing that we're coming to this point in our society where everything is mechanized, and replicated, and similar, and mass produced and commoditized. The one thing that I am a big fan of is not commoditizing people. That's the art of life, I think. Is that each person is an individual, so we can use that individuality to really create an awesome farm-based system that is working like no other farm would. Like every farm is an individualistic thing. You can't commoditize a farm. You can't really franchise a ... I mean you can franchise a farm, but from the standpoint that I'm trying to do things, it's like how is my farm different this year? How do I tune it in this year to make it work the best?

Then the next year I always know it's not going to be the same at all. Just those kind of details, that's what's going through my mind every day when I'm also trying to manage the mechanical aspects of my farm. That's the beauty of being a human being, is that you can manage things from a scientific standpoint in your right mind, and you can also manage things from an artistic standpoint in the left side of your mind.

Chris Blanchard: I always feel like managing things, quote/unquote, scientifically is, I don't know, it's easier. When you're trying to be an artist really what you're talking about with employees is paying attention to the differences. That puts a lot more work on you. I mean I know that just from dealing with employees. I think about it dealing with livestock. It's a lot easier to just say, "Okay crew, we're all going to go do this thing now." It's a lot different if you've got a crew of seven or eight people and you're trying to figure out where each person fits, and to match up those strengths in every aspect of their job, or of their work day.



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Chris Jagger:

It's not like every move I'm like, "Okay, how am I going to fine tune this for this person?" It's more of an overall, all-encompassing thing of this person is really good with attention to detail, so of course I'm going to put them in the washer pack area. This person is a beast, that they can just go out and they can run a weed eater all day and be content with it, as long as they can have their headphones on and listen to Slayer, you know? That's more the overall way that I assess the energetics. On a day-to-day basis, yeah we still have to get the nuts and bolts done. It's a macro versus a micro observational kind of thing. It's like you have to decide how microscopic you want to get with it.

Yeah, it takes more work, but that's kind of my job as being the owner. I rarely blame other people on the farm if something doesn't go right. It's usually me, it's all on me. Like if so-and-so didn't do this, well it's because I didn't set them up properly to do that. Now if they just mess up and they just say, "Well I'm not going to go harvest those carrots." And they walk off, then of course that's their fault. If I say, "Hey, go harvest carrots." And they go out there and they harvest out of the wrong bed, well it's my fault because I didn't say, "Hey, harvest carrots out of bed E8, and start halfway down. Look for this marker that's why you should start picking there. Then only pick the ones that are over thumb sized in diameter."

Those are the two differences. Is like I blame myself for not setting things up properly, instead of blaming my employees. That's my job as the farm owner. Sometimes I think people that are running things are just looking to get to that point where they can step back, and not have to put in as much effort. They're like, "Okay, now I've made it, now I'm just an owner/manager, boss, whatever. Now I've got my crew who's just going to do it, and they're going to figure it out. If they don't figure it out, I'm going to blame them for it." I've never approached it like that. I've always said my job should get harder every year, in a certain respect, because I'm just trying to make sure that the wellbeing of my crew is there. That's everything to me.

Chris Blanchard:

I found, and it took me way too long to figure this out, but when I started taking responsibility for what was going on on my farm, and even in my other relationships, and asking, "What's my role in this, and how do I get what I want out of this?" It really shifted things for me. When people were first describing it to me, and I spent a lot of time being very resistant to the idea that I was the problem, but once I realized that I was the problem, it was actually liberating. It helped me to understand, it gave me a sense of control that I hadn't had before, right? If you're working with crappy workers who are lazy, and that's the perspective that you have, and that's kind of the end-all, be-all, there's really nothing you can do about that, right?

If the problem is that you didn't give them adequate instructions for how to harvest the carrots, and which carrots to harvest, well that's actually something you can do something about. That's actually something that you've got control over.

Chris Jagger:

Yeah, and the other side of what you said there too is that if you have crappy workers, well I hired them. That's the other side of it, is I hired them, so maybe I need to fire them. That's part of what I was mentioning about taking the



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emotion out of it too. Like when I first started farming I was like, "I don't want to fire these people. Yeah, they're horrible workers, but I don't want to hurt their feelings, because I like them as a person, they're just a horrible worker."

That's something I had to come to grips with as I've gone on over the years is I'm not going to hire you back. Why? Well I like you as a person, but you're a horrible worker. That's just how it is. If I decide to keep that person on, and they keep doing crappy work, then I'm to blame for that. It's not their fault, that's just who they are. That's not saying that I can't help them try to improve, but some people just don't. Some people it's just not their thing. It is, it's super-liberating once you realize that it's all on you, the owner, then it's like, "Okay, then I know what needs to be done."

Chris Blanchard: On a similar note, you had commented to me before we got started today that you wanted to talk about what you see coming for the organic industry. I think this is another one of those things, right? We can spend a lot of time complaining about the larger market forces that are having an impact on local and organic farms. Or we can figure out how we're going to respond to those and take responsibility for our own actions, and how we're actually going to react to that. Could you talk a little bit about what you see coming down the pike for organic farms?

Chris Jagger: Yeah, that's a big one. Well I think it's regionally based. I think that every region, or every demographic across the country has different constraints that make it different. I'll just speak to our area here in Southern Oregon, because we don't have a large metropolitan area that we support. So I think in some ways, we're kind of the canary in the mineshaft. We're seeing the effects probably sooner than other people see. We're seeing the consolidation that's happening among distributors, and we're seeing some of the larger farms are just going direct to the stores now, which are cutting out that direct line that the smaller farmers have.

I think that we're going to see the labor shortage is going to continue. Minimum wage is going up, minimum wage here in Oregon just went up to I think it's \$10.25 now. I know it's going to be up around \$12 to \$13 in the next two or three years, so that's a challenge. Where is it all going? I'm not really sure. I think that direct to consumer is really the key in the future. What does that look like? Does that mean that I distribute my vegetables through Amazon? Maybe. Maybe that's why they bought Wholefoods, I don't know. I'm open to looking at anything. I'm really passionate about the world of digital media through things like Instagram and even Snap Chat for the younger generations.

How can I start utilizing those networks to reach out and find out what's really going on, and figure out how to reach my consumer base better. I think that people don't realize the power of the internet that they have in their hands with their phones. I'm really intrigued by that. There's a lot of direction that we can go as far as direct marketing goes there. I think you're going to see smaller farms have to find value-added crops, whatever that is. Whether it's processed or just higher dollar crops, and niche markets that ... It's like how do you find those niche markets? Well that's where I think the world of digital media comes into play. Going out there on that digital landscape and finding those marketplaces that want your hot sauce.



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That's one of the examples that we're looking at right now, is like how do we find widespread distribution and tell our story effectively to these potential buyers for our hot sauce? Those are the questions I ask, because we're not in the organic farming world that we were in 2000. It's not the world that Eliot Coleman and Alice Waters created. It's not the world that Rodale and Alan Chadwick, the list goes on and on of all of those elder farmers, and elder movements. It's a new world we're in right now, so I'm really looking to the future, and not trying to get caught in what I think that the architecture of organic farming should be, based on the past was. I'm looking forward. I hope that doesn't mean virtual carrots, I really am hoping.

Chris Blanchard: Yeah, some days it does feel like that might be what the future brings.

Chris Jagger: Yeah.

Chris Blanchard: With that, we're going to turn to our lighting round, after we get a word from one more sponsor and we'll be right back.

This lighting round and perennial support for the Farmer to Farmer podcast is brought to by BCS America. BCS two-wheel tractors are often mistaken for just a rototiller, but it is truly a superior piece of farming equipment. Engineered and built in Italy, where small farms 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 am not the only fan. More than 1.5 million people in 50 countries have discovered the advantages of owning Europe's most popular two-wheel tractor. These really are small tractors with the kinds of features found on their four-wheel cousins, and a wide array of equipment. Power harrows, rotary plows, flail mowers, snow thrower, sickle bar mowers, chippers, log splitters and more and more. Check out BCSAmerica.com to see photos and videos of BCS in action. BCSAmerica.com.

Chris, what's your favorite tool on the farm?

Chris Jagger: Favorite tool on the farm, currently it's the flame weeder for sure, just because it cut our costs so immensely.

Chris Blanchard: You said that's a whole bed flame weeder, you're not flaming individual rows with that, is that right?

Chris Jagger: It's actually a three-bed flame weeder, so it has two wings on the side and one in the middle.

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

Chris Jagger: Currently peppers.

Chris Blanchard: Why?



SHOW NOTES:

- Chris Jagger: They taste amazing, they make great hot sauce, and I just love the way they grow, the structure of the plant, the leaves, everything about them. They feel futuristic and ancient at the same time to me.
- Chris Blanchard: If you could go back in time and tell your beginning farmer self one thing, what would it be?
- Chris Jagger: Oh man, that's a really good question. Probably invest in infrastructure sooner.
- Chris Blanchard: Investing in infrastructure can be so hard when you're a young farmer, because you don't necessarily know where things are going in your operation.
- Chris Jagger: I think that if I had known then what I know now, I probably would have reached out to more experienced farmers more, and really tapped into what they had to say. Not just asked them questions, but actually listened to their answers. That's something that I find young farmers do, is they ask questions hoping they get the answers they want to hear, and often they get the answers that are the truth. So being open to the truth, instead of just hearing what you want to hear.
- Chris Blanchard: Chris, thank you so much for being part of the Farmer to Farmer podcast today.
- Chris Jagger: Thanks so much for having me Chris, I really appreciate it.
- Chris Blanchard: All right, so wrapping things up here, I'll say again, that this is episode 129 of the Farmer to Farmer podcast, and you can find the notes for the show at FarmertoFarmerPodcast.com, by looking on the episodes page, or just searching for Jagger. That's J-A-G-G-E-R. The transcript for this episode is brought to you by Earth Tools, offering the most complete selection of walk-behind farming equipment and high-quality garden tools in North America. And by Rock Dust Local, the first company in North America specializing in local sourcing and delivery of the BEST rock dusts and biochar for organic farming. And by Local Food Marketplace, providing an integrated, scalable solution for farms and food hubs to process customer orders, including online ordering, harvesting, packing, delivery, invoicing and payment processing. Additional funding for transcripts is provided by North Central SARE, providing grants and education to advance innovations in Sustainable Agriculture.
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Thank you for listening. Be safe out there, and keep the tractor running.