



“Milliken Farm started out as a hobby.

I was a weekend enthusiast and I started growing produce just for myself and my wife in my home’s backyard. We wanted to stay away from the pesticides and insecticides and the quality of the produce that was available locally at the time was kind of disappointing.

Plus, it just tastes better when you grow it.

I started with raised beds and then I moved to 800 square feet of bio-intensive gardening, which is planting really close together in a small space. It took several years but I was eventually able to grow enough for us, fill up our fridge, and still have plenty to give away just off that 800 square feet in the backyard.

After spending 35 years gardening and farming on and off as a hobby, I decided to start producing commercially about a year and a half ago.

There was a huge learning curve when I switched because as a hobby you grow it, you eat it, and you enjoy it. Commercially, you have to continue growing and you have to stage it so you can offer the same produce each time even though they don’t all grow in at the same time.

I also use other people’s land for my production. I started out as an urban farmer and I reckon’ I still am because I pretty much till up and plant wherever someone will let me till up and plant.

Luckily there’s a world of information on YouTube and the internet, so I was able to spend two years researching commercial growing before I jumped in feet first with my first market last March.

And I’ve been doing it full time ever since.

Which as a full-time producer there are your good days and your bad days. I lose a couple bushels of corn every time a storm comes through because they will blow over or I have to figure out how to deal with bugs without using pesticides.

But it’s still worthwhile in the end because I get to share information with other hobby farmers who shop with me or have transparency with my customers on how their food is grown as well as provide a quality of produce that wasn’t always readily available in this area.

It’s a real service and a real product that people can eat that makes them feel good.”

- Dwight R. Milliken Jr., owner of Milliken Farms and regular vendor at the Tuesday evening and Saturday morning City Center Farmers Market