

Larry Pletcher, Vegetable Ranch, Warner, NH
Larry farms over 20 acres in both Warner and Concord.

“I started to farm organically because I am concerned about the health effects of pesticides and persistent chemical fertilizers. I can farm and still minimize farming's impact on the environment. Finally, I have reached a point where I believe that organic produce is better tasting and healthier for the consumer.



I grow a wide range of produce - over 40 different vegetables.

It would be dull to grow only a few items. Markets expect me to offer a good variety. Also, diversity means that I will have food to offer despite current challenges such as blight or bad weather. No matter how bad the weather is - some selection of vegetables will love it.

Do I make a livable profit? Not an easy question. For the last eight years I have always made a profit. For the first few years, I would not have been able to live only off the farm profits. I was fortunate enough to be able to invest early profits into farm infrastructure. I think we have now arrived at a point where the farm is financially sustainable. Farming is all about scale - not so large as to be industrial or tempted by shortcuts - but large enough so that proceeds from crop sales will be enough to support a family. I would encourage anyone's children or grandchildren to continue farming - but only if they loved it.

I have been a grower for LHCSA since its inception. It has helped my farm be more profitable by providing a definite market for a broad range of produce. More importantly, the CSA provides income early in the season when crop sales are scarce. In my view, a mix of different markets is as important as a wide selection of crops. CSAs and farmer's markets play different roles in marketing produce, but are both critical to a profitable farm

The Vegetable Ranch LLC grows several heirloom varieties. Over the years I've learned to appreciate why heirlooms became "niche market" vegetables - they are usually delicate and very difficult to bring to market with a pleasing appearance. I grow them because the taste just can't be beat. If you want a great tomato try a Cherokee Purple.”