

## Farm Beginnings

...Raw Deal, from page 19

livestock numbers, either by increasing the productivity of their existing acres or acquiring more land.

Bernhardt is adept at using social media to tell her farm's story. Her animals and the land are extremely photogenic and while scrolling through Medicine Creek's Instagram feed, it's easy to forget how much work has gone into setting up this operation. Misik built their house and outbuildings, filling knowledge gaps by viewing YouTube videos on such things as plumbing. Their latest construction project is a reminder of why they ended up launching a farm far from a prime row crop production region.

After setting up the temporary paddock, the couple head back across open pastures

to the farmstead and take refuge from the autumn wind in an 1880s-era barn that is in a state of being reassembled. Misik found it on a farmstead in southern Minnesota that was slated for dozing. He carefully took it apart and labeled the timbers with animal ear tags before hauling it north. Its former home sold for \$12,000 an acre, he says.

As they sit in an old church pew (Misik rescued it from his hometown) in the barn's cavernous loft, the couple talks about how they aren't finished when it comes to building a farm from the roots up. Their long-term goal is to make the reassembled barn into a combination events/education center, on-farm store, and Airbnb. They are also working constantly on building soil health using tweaks to their rotational grazing system. For example, they recently expanded bale grazing to more distant pastures as a way to improve those paddocks while providing animals nutrition during the winter. And recalling their training in Holistic Management goal setting, they are also

working on making sure farm work doesn't dominate: they have a 3-year-old son, Harvey, and have committed to doing things like going swimming more this summer.

Guiding the young farmers' efforts is the overall goal of making the land an important link between the health of the soil and how eaters view their food choices, as well as what public policies they support. From the beginning, Bernhardt has emphasized through the farm's website and social media outreach that their "regenerative" system not only provides healthy, happy meat, but improves the environment, producing, among other things, carbon-sequestering soil.

"I feel like we're luring customers in with happy animals and then trying to teach them soil health," she says. "Someday, maybe they'll come for the soil health education and then get some meat on the side, instead of the other way around."

In other words, this non-Farm Country farm has the potential to have a positive impact far beyond its fence lines. □

## Seeking Farmers-Seeking Land Clearinghouse

Are you a beginning farmer looking to rent or purchase farmland in the Midwest? Or are you an established farmer/landowner in the Midwest who is seeking a beginning farmer to purchase or rent your land, or to work with in a partnership/employee situation? Then consider having your information circulated via the Land Stewardship Project's *Seeking Farmers-Seeking Land Clearinghouse*. To fill out an online form and for more information, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/seekingfarmersseekinglandclearinghouse](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/seekingfarmersseekinglandclearinghouse). You can also obtain forms by e-mailing LSP's Karen Stettler at [stettler@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:stettler@landstewardshipproject.org), or by calling her at 507-523-3366. Below are a few recent listings. For the latest listings, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/seekingfarmersseekinglandclearinghouse](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/seekingfarmersseekinglandclearinghouse).

### Seeking Farmland

◆ Kari Boyer is seeking to rent 1-5 acres of farmland in *Illinois or Wisconsin*. Land that has not been sprayed for several years and includes 1-3 tillable acres is preferred. Contact: Kari Boyer, 618-581-6390, [karielizabethboyer@gmail.com](mailto:karielizabethboyer@gmail.com).

◆ Camille Mefleh and Luciano Chance are seeking to purchase farmland in the *western Wisconsin area between the Twin Cities and Menomonie*, ideally within 1.5 hours of the Twin Cities. They are looking for at least 25 acres. Contact: Camille Mefleh and Luciano Chance, 612-226-4397, [camille.mefleh@gmail.com](mailto:camille.mefleh@gmail.com).

◆ Mark Sloo is seeking to purchase farmland in *Minnesota or Wisconsin (relatively close to the Twin Cities)*. He and his partner will consider all sizes of farms. Contact: Mark Sloo, 612-879-8838, [msloo@msn.com](mailto:msloo@msn.com).

◆ Kate and Peter McColl are seeking to purchase 5+ acres of tillable farmland in *western Wisconsin or southeastern Minnesota (Winona and Onalaska area)*. Contact: Kate and Peter McColl, 507-460-2465, [katolah@gmail.com](mailto:katolah@gmail.com).

◆ Mikayla Birschbach is seeking to purchase a maximum of 100 acres of farmland in *eastern Minnesota or western Wisconsin*. A farm with at least 70 acres of pasture, a house, and a milking parlor is preferred. Contact: Mikayla Birschbach, 920-517-1650, [mikayla.birschbach@gmail.com](mailto:mikayla.birschbach@gmail.com).

◆ Xee Vang is seeking to rent 1 acre of tillable farmland in *Minnesota*. Land with water is preferred. Contact: Xee Vang, 612-407-0874, [xeevang02@gmail.com](mailto:xeevang02@gmail.com).

◆ Minnesota Agrarian Commons is looking to purchase 70-150 acres within a one-hour radius of *Minnesota's Twin Cities or along the corridor between the Twin Cities and Rochester*. Agrarian Commons is looking for a gift, bargain sale, or market value sale to be achieved through Agrarian Trust. Contact: Robin Moore, 320-321-5244, [rmoore@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:rmoore@landstewardshipproject.org).

### Farmland Available

◆ Susan Swanson has for sale 3.25 acres of farmland in *Washington County in the Twin Cities, Minn., region (Marine on St. Croix)*. There is 1 tillable acre and 1 pasture acre, and the land has not been sprayed for several years.

There is the possibility of leasing 9 acres adjoining the property. The asking price is \$289,000. Contact: Susan Swanson, 651-442-5789, [smswan17@gmail.com](mailto:smswan17@gmail.com).

◆ Suzan Erem of the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust has for sale 53 acres of certified organic farmland in *southwestern Iowa's Pottawattamie County (near Honey Creek)*. The land consists of 33 tillable acres and 18 acres of timber suitable for agroforestry in the Loess Hills just north of Omaha and Council Bluffs. Contact: Suzan Erem, 319-480-4241, [suzan@silt.org](mailto:suzan@silt.org).

◆ Margaret Lyngholm has for sale 30 acres of farmland in *southeastern Minnesota's Fillmore County (near Lanesboro)*. The land consists of 4 tillable acres, 4 pasture acres, and 16 forest acres. Contact: Margaret Lyngholm, 507-250-5065, [strawbale100@gmail.com](mailto:strawbale100@gmail.com).

◆ Terry Rikke has for rent 5 acres of farmland in *west-central Minnesota's Kandiyohi County (near Lake Lillian)*. The land consists of 2 pasture acres. The land has not been sprayed for several years. Contact: Terry Rikke, 612-212-6407, [notstandingstill@gmail.com](mailto:notstandingstill@gmail.com).