



Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Minnesota Farmer Shows Hi-Tech and Organic Can Work Together

When you buy organic, you support farmers like Carmen Fernholz who are working hard to feed the world in ways that keep our planet safe and healthy.

Madison, Minnesota - November 11, 2014 - Carmen Fernholz farms 400 acres of certified organic land in southwestern Minnesota. His farm is a good example of how today's organic farmers are adapting the same technology used by conventional farmers.

"Many people think organic farmers are low-tech," says Fernholz. "That may be true for some, but the organic farmers I know use the same hi-tech equipment you would find on any farm around here, conventional or organic."

But Fernholz draws the line at using equipment that doesn't suit organic production. "Some of my farm machinery, while still hi-tech, is specialized for organics," says Fernholz. "This gives me the best of both worlds. I farm in ways that can feed the world, but avoid the practices that can take agriculture in the wrong direction."

Like his conventional neighbors, Fernholz harvests his corn, soybeans, and other grains with what is called a "combine." With one pass through the field, he can harvest grain, monitor yields on his on-board computer system, and empty the crop into a truck that takes it to a storage facility on his farm.

Fernholz also uses the same type of tractor found on any farm in his part of the state. It's equipped with state-of-the-art navigation equipment, which will steer it down the rows of crops and turn it at each end of the field. "It would probably work OK without me, but then what would I do?" quipped Fernholz. "Besides, sitting in a climate-controlled cab equipped with built-in noise and dust protection is a far cry from how I farmed years ago. Organics, like all farming, is adapting to the changing times."

But when it comes to weed control, Fernholz parts ways with his conventional neighbors. "On my farm you won't find a giant spray rig or any of the toxic chemicals those spray rigs apply to control weeds," he said. Depending on field conditions, he may turn to his large tine weeder, his cultivator, or his rotary hoe.

"I use separate machines for different weed problems, in much the same way other farmers would use different chemicals. But the methods I use are safer for the environment and my family," said Fernholz. "And there is an added bonus. I'm not going to the chemical dealers every year to buy more from them. I buy my equipment once and that's it."

Carmen Fernholz is adamant that using appropriate modern technology in organic farming is the way of the future. "The next time someone tells you organic farming can't feed the world because it is primitive and low-tech, show them some pictures of how I farm. More often than not, they will have a hard time telling the difference between the technology I use and that used by any other farm in this part of the state."

There is a difference, however. The difference is in the label Certified Organic. It assures the best food for consumers, the best practices to take care of the countryside, and the promise of a world fed in the most sustainable way possible.

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