

Jimmy Acres: A Tommerdahl Family Farm

Vol. 5
June 2016

Hello friends and neighbors!

Summer crept up on us fast!! I love this time of year as we transition between seasons and get to see both spring and summer plants growing together. It's been an exciting month at the farm, here's some of what's been going on:

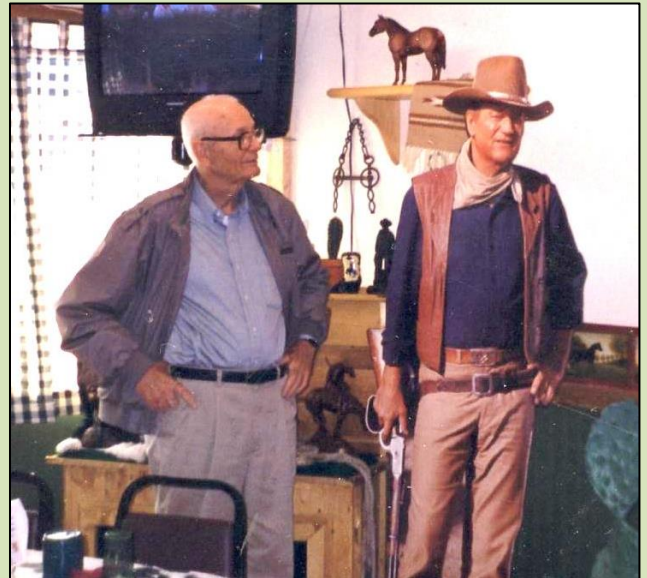
- ❖ We got a well!! While it's great to have, we still plan on employing water-saving techniques and building our farm system in a way that requires minimal irrigation. By growing soil, avoiding tilling, and mulching heavily, we are able to reduce our dependence on irrigation and spend more time on other tasks...we love using biology and ecology to do work for us.



- ❖ We also got a bonus load of rock dust from drilling the well (pictured above). If you've never heard of using rock dust on your plants, it's just a new-ish trendy way of remineralizing the soil to get a more diverse array of nutrients to your plants. It's also the old-timer farmer's favorite fertilizer for the same reason. When plants are living off of more than just the nitrogen, phosphate, and potash found in synthetic fertilizer, they are stronger and better able to fight off pests, fungi, and diseases—similar to how you might take extra vitamins and minerals to help fight off a cold. It also means the veggies produced by these plants are packed with more and higher levels of nutrients than those grown conventionally in depleted soils. Nitrogen might seem to help a plant grow, but it's all show!
- ❖ We've successfully gotten biology to do more work for us by employing nematodes to work in the garden. We were having trouble controlling flea beetles on the eggplants and cucumber beetles on the cucurbits (cucumbers, squash, and melon family), but within 2 weeks of adding beneficial nematodes to the soil, we've noticed a **DRAMATIC** decrease in populations of both of these pests. Between the nematodes and the rock dust, the plants look so much happier!

Who is Jimmy??

We've had lots of people ask recently about the name of our farm, so we'll take a moment to answer that question:



"Jimmy," in a way, acts as a tribute to Chris, Anna, and Jake's grandfather, Jim. After growing up on a farm in Iowa, Jim eventually made his way to NC, where he worked as an environmental engineer. Although he was not a farmer by profession, Jim always loved plants, tinkering around in the garden, going on botany walks, and talking about the weather. Since he would never have wanted anything named after him, we couldn't name the farm directly after him—think modest Midwestern Norwegian farmer (from Lake Wobegon, for all you NPR nerds out there).

Jim used to drive around town in a '96 GMC Jimmy. Eventually, The Jimmy was passed down and became Jake's first car and close friend. This car not only shares a name with our grandfather, but, according to Jake, The Jimmy and Jim also share the core values that lie at the heart of our farm. In his own words,

"Just like the grandpa/car that Jimmy Acres is named after, the farm strives to represent innovation, sustainability, reliability, and most importantly, heart, courage, truth, and a midwestern tendency to never stray from the topic of weather in a conversation. Our goal for the farm is to go beyond simple self-sustenance and to create a surplus of goods from little more than what the land provides. As we move forward, we strive to live up to the standards set by both Jim Thegrandpa and Jimmy Thecar:

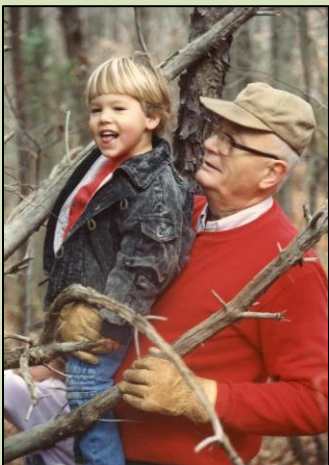
Continued below

Things to look forward to next month:



Jimmy (continued)

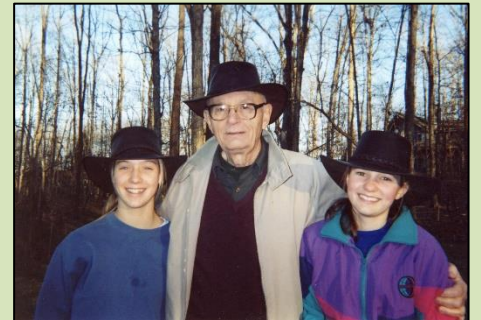
“Just as the Jimmy produced its own oil and windshield wiper fluid from trash dropped on the floorboard (or we can only assume this is what happened because I never checked any of the fluids)—we strive to produce our own mulches, fertilizers, and even energy from agricultural waste.



Jim liked to eat grape nuts—we grow perennial plants, such as grapes and nuts, which require minimal tilling of the land, allowing moisture and nutrients to remain fixed in our soils.

Jimmy liked to run off battery power even when it had the option to run on gas—even though we have tractors and mowers that use diesel and gas, we like to take advantage of alternative options to get work done on the farm.

Jim was a bald man—well, if you’ve seen any of us Tommerdahl guys recently, I think you’d agree that we can just keep up the good work on this goal.



And finally, we should name the farm "Jimmy Acres" because it has a ring to it, but at the same time doesn't roll off the tongue so naturally that one can forget it easily. The name will stick with you like dead leaves on the Jimmy's grill in mid-July, or like the waxy chocolate that coats your teeth after eating those dollar store donuts Jim used to love to buy for us.”

As always, please feel free to pass this along to all of your vegetable-loving friends and neighbors. And don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions, comments, concerns, thoughts, ideas, critiques, or suggestions!

“[Using synthetic fertilizers] is kinda like urinating in your pants to stay warm. It's a good short term strategy, but long-term, it's really not the thing to do.”

–Will Harris, White Oak Pastures (Bluffton, GA)



Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/JimmyAcresFarm>