



MEADOWLA
ORGANIC

Farmer-owned whole grains and stoneground flour



Our Mission

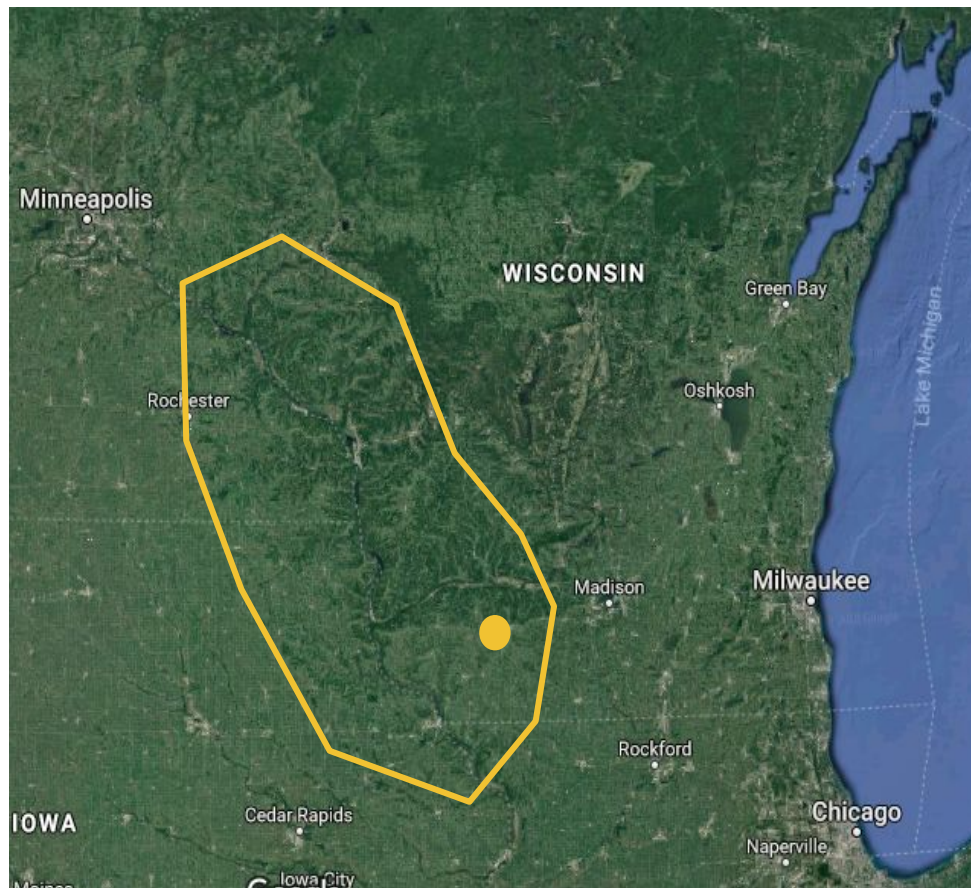


We are farmers committed to cultivating a regenerative ecosystem by growing real food, improving the health and resilience of our soils, protecting the safety of our water, and investing in the vitality of our rural community.



MEADOWLAND
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The Driftless



PERENNIAL LEGUMES



WINTER WHEAT



CORN



BUCKWHEAT



RYE AND SPELT



BEANS



OATS, SPRING WHEAT, BARLEY



PASTURE



Our own stone ground mill



MEADOWLARK
ORGANIC

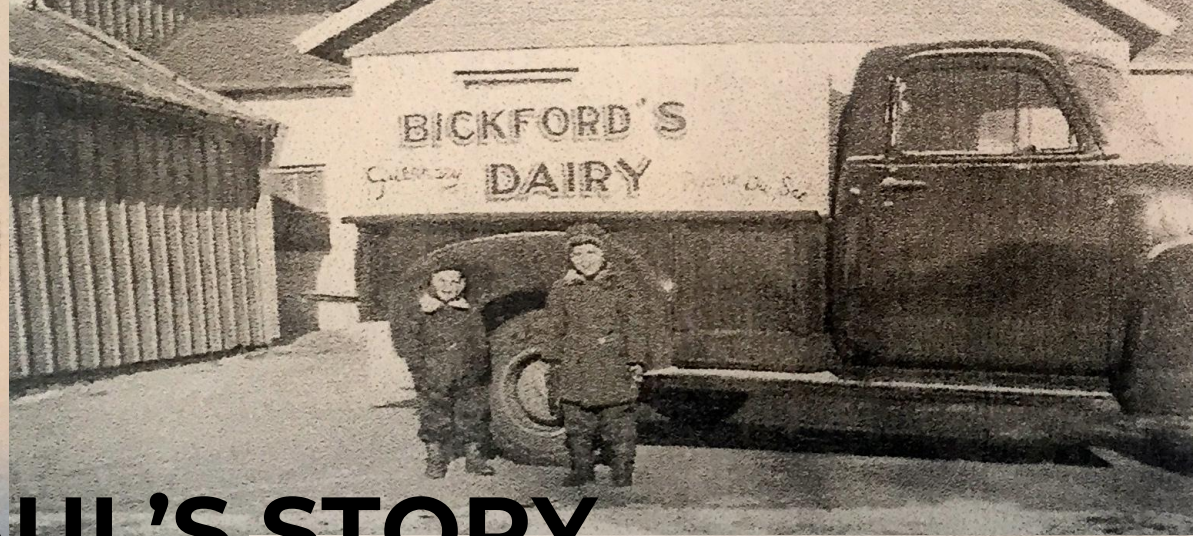
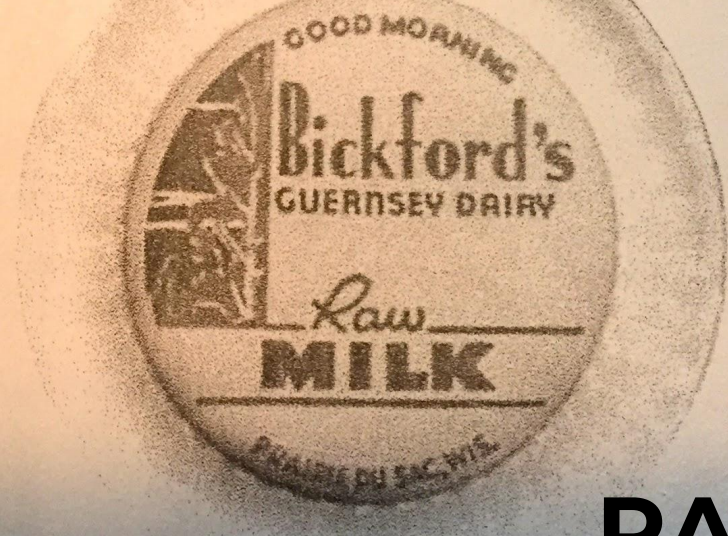
NOW:

- USDA (VAPG and CIG) funded toll milling
- Drying, storage, cleaning, and dehulling infrastructure
- Energized customers and allies in Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago

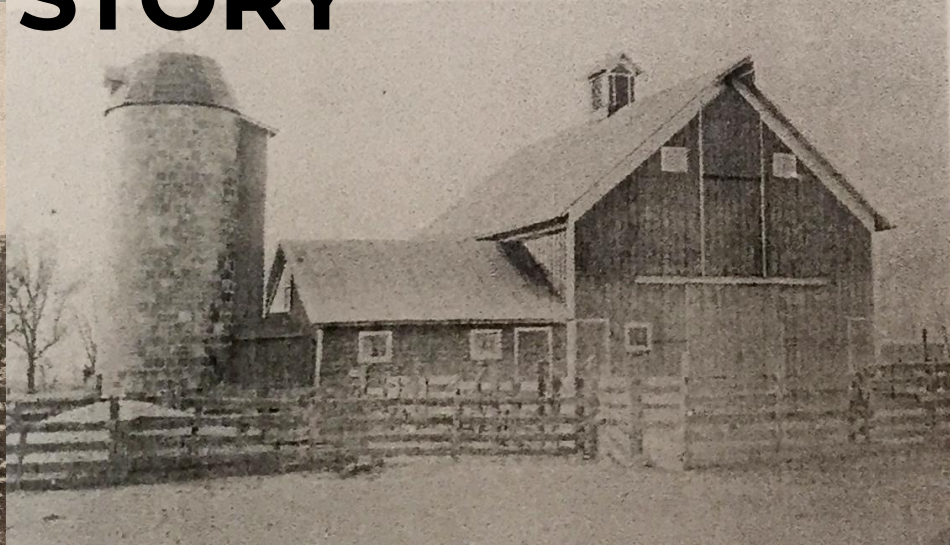
NEXT:

- Seeking investment partners for pilot mill
- Looking for miller/partner to join operation





PAUL'S STORY



An aerial photograph of a farm complex. The image shows several large, light-colored barns and silos. A prominent tall, cylindrical silo is on the right side. Another similar silo is in the lower center. There are various other smaller buildings and structures scattered across the farm. The surrounding area appears to be a mix of fields and roads. The text "PAUL'S STORY" is overlaid in the center of the image.

PAUL'S STORY

An aerial photograph of a large farm complex. The central area contains several large, interconnected barns with grey and white roofs. To the right of the main barn complex are two tall, dark blue cylindrical silos. A long, low red building is situated at the top of the farm. The surrounding landscape includes green fields, a small pond in the upper left, and a dirt road winding through the property. The text "PAUL'S STORY" is overlaid in the center of the image.

PAUL'S STORY



PAUL'S STORY



PAUL'S STORY



PAUL'S STORY

Paul's Story - Summary

- Home farm was in inevitable development path
- Had access to capital from his father on new farmland
- Siblings inherited home farm in Prairie du Sac
- Son Levi works on the farm
- Adaptable, not change-averse
- Started thinking about his transition out at the same age his father did
- Farm is highly leveraged, required creative thinking



HALEE AND JOHN'S STORY



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Halee and John's Story - Summary



- John: Lancaster/Milwaukee to NYC and back to the Driftless
- Halee: AZ/TX to NYC and to the Driftless
- Previous careers as chefs/bakers
- Have no access to capital (other than through beginning farmer loans at FSA)
- Willing to invest sweat equity, work for a mentor
- John's family farm was not an option
- Committed to raising grain and grazing cattle

Craigslist, July 1st, 2015



I am seeking a forward-thinking individual or couple to join my 950 acre organic farming operation to assist in all facets of growing feed crops and to assist in marketing of corn, soybeans, small grains and hay.

A general background in organic practices is preferred and an ability to grasp a systems approach to management is needed. You should be knowledgeable in soil building and weed management, and general crop growing skills. Organic production requires many pieces of equipment and a mechanical aptitude is necessary. Unique marketing ideas are welcome.

Ethics and trust are a cornerstone of organic farming and are important to my operation. I want to share my 40 years of farm experience with someone who is willing to work to improve my farm. This position could evolve into a partnership or other long range business association.

Housing is available with a barn that could be used for horses or other animals. Compensation and other details will be mutually negotiated with the successful applicant. Send resume, work history, and personal message why you want to belong to the organic community.

Transition Framework

- Leverage FSA beginning resources to achieve independent equity for Halee and John (cattle, and home farm)
- Earn/gift/purchase stock in corporation over time
- Farm business will provide pension for rest of Paul's life, funded through stock purchase/transfer, proceeds from land contract.
- Inherit remainder of stock through Paul's estate.
- Provisions will be made to protect farm in event of long term care needs, etc.
- Effectively, Halee and John become Paul's heirs: benefits and responsibilities



**82 Acres with
house and barn**



Rented land

**Land owned by
Bickford Farms Inc**

Ridgeway
Pine Relict

Ridgeway

Ridgeway Lumber Co

U.S. Highway 151

Main St

Google

3D

+

-

Google

Building equity

- FSA beginning farmer real estate loan (in process)
 - 5% down, 45% loan from FSA, 50% land contract with Paul.
 - Approx \$625,000 transaction: FSA loan and land contract will be paid based on crop sales from these 82 acres, as well as income from beef enterprise
 - That property will be in John and Halee's name
- FSA beginning farmer microloan to purchase cattle and equipment (\$50,000)
- Cattle eat primarily unsaleable hay (dirty side, etc.), no/low cost, and use “free” pastures



Accessing capital



- Like Paul did with his father, John and Halee have been able to access credit through Bickford Farms Inc.
- Bickford Farms borrowed \$275,000 to expand drying and storage infrastructure, and to construct grain cleaning and dehulling facility on farm.

Transition Values



Mentorship

Trust

Commitment

Shared Vision

Mentorship



- Older experienced farmers are a scarce resource, and in this particular moment, the last link to embodied knowledge of pre-chemical farming
- Paul: a lifetime of farming experience, dairy, grazing, machine skills, welding, etc.
- John and Halee: long term commitment to farming, basic machine operating skills and some animal husbandry; no welding, and no experience troubleshooting mechanical problems

Trust & Commitment



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- We started as employees, though quickly with management responsibilities
 - Rotation, crop planning, soils program
 - Bookkeeping in 2018
 - Grants administration: VAPG and CIG
- Compensation is creative (pasture, hay, housing), based on living expenses.



Trust & Commitment



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- Paul borrowed substantially to rehab a vacant farmhouse where Halee and John now live
 - Aside from concrete, roof, electrical, all labor was performed by Wepking's family members, to limit costs
- Halee and John will repay construction loan with 82 acre purchase
- Paul's son Levi will be lifetime employee

Shared Vision

- Shifting the practices of the farm to focus on value added food grade grains, and long diverse rotations
- Building livestock herd back to the scale appropriate for the farm.
- Open eyes to complimentary enterprises: grazing, tree crops, honey/maple/sorghum, vegetables, etc.
- Creating a flexible, adaptable, resilient farm



Using what we've learned



- Helping an existing business evolve/improve is much more cost-effective than starting from scratch
- Be flexible about location/community
- Not enough farm kids to fill roles; non-farm kids lack some skills, but bring new perspectives
- Advocating for formal apprenticeship programs
- Not all mentorship relationships will result in farm succession
- Help create transition plans that limit debt for younger generation