

## Butcher Crick Farm

**Jennie Smith**

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Known to many as the “Tomato Lady,” Jennie Smith is committed to her business enterprise. She promotes the importance of local food systems and educates the public about preservation of the past through the use of heritage seed varieties.

Starting her business in 2009 with heirloom vegetable sales to a few local restaurants, Jennie found her market niche featuring heirloom tomatoes that she sells to 18 restaurants, the local country club, caterers, through her booth at the Des Moines Farmer’s Market and online sales.

Jennie raises primarily heirloom cultivars of vegetables but focused on tomatoes as her cash crop. She also raises heirloom eggplants, summer/winter squash, cucumbers, and herbs. Edible flowers and custom cropping for local restaurants have been added to offerings as well. As a small operation, Jennie has the luxury of selecting for taste rather than production bred characteristics.

Armed with a BLS from Iowa State University and Masters in Rural Agriculture from Massey University in New Zealand and as a manager of an upscale Des Moines restaurant, Smith is a perfect leader for the next generation of Iowa organic farmers, a mentor for those wanting to start their own small business and an important advocate for today’s food movement.



Jennie lives on the farm with her grandparents to continue learning about their lives and the family land.

Jennie believes strongly in agritourism and wants to have families and students on the land to talk about how she contributes to local food systems.

Jennie also hosts private parties, planting parties and chef potlucks on the farm site.

*Assistance provided by the Iowa Heartland Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. \* 301 N. Buxton, Indianola, IA. 50125*

*Funding for this Producer Profile was provided by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service—Farmers Market Promotion Program.*