Saving the Family Farm-A Blueberry Success Story

JQ Fruit Farm and Orchard is part of a traditional family farm that has been in existence since 1906. It originally consisted of a 40 acre homestead along the Rum River on the north side of Princeton, Minnesota. Great grandparents, Frank and Nettie Penhallegon grew carrots, potatoes and chickens. In 1940 grandfather, John Q. Penhallegon took over the farm, which had grown to 200 acres and was now a dairy farm, which included a bee apiary. By 1977, Beverly A. Penhallegon (maiden name) took over the farm, where rental grain crops were only being grown and urban sprawl had reduced the homestead to 100 acres. Beverly passed on in 1984, and then her son (Dan Whitcomb) took over the farm. In 1991 Dan married Carol and they now run the family farm together.

The dilemma was how to maintain the family farm lifestyle for another generation and make it profitable and self-sustainable. So, we searched the past for the answer.

John and Josie Penhallegon adopted Beverly Penhallegon after the loss of their child. Beverly was originally born to a Swedish immigrant family, Axel and Jennie (Skogg) Lagerstrom, They named her Lillian Jane. Jennie died shortly after childbirth in Little Fork, MN. Axel was a river log runner for the paper mills. He was left with 11 children in a small log cabin, so some of the children were adopted out by a pastoral circuit rider. Lillian Jane was only six-month-old. Dan's mother often said she was born in a Blueberry patch up North and as a child (Dan) often ventured north to pick blueberries by the old log cabin with his mother's relatives. So, in honor of Dan's mother Beverly and his Swedish/Dutch ancestors, it seemed appropriate to transition the farm to a Blueberry and fruit specialty crop farm. The farm is named JQ Fruit Farm & Orchard after Grandfather John Quincy Penhallegon.

JQ Fruit Farm was first established in 1987 with the planting of 2 acres of Strawberries, 4.5 acres of Apples, ½ acre of Plums and 200 Northblue Blueberry bushes with the help of a Lakes and Pines Grant of $500 dollars, and a personnel investment of $1500, as part of a farm diversification effort. In 1988, the farm first produced about 2000 quarts of strawberries. In 1989, the first acre of blueberries was established and reached production potential in 1990. Today we have over 8000 blueberry bushes and over 400 Minnesota Hardy Apple trees.

Please come and join our family in a traditional farm experience