

# Dawn 2 Dusk Farm

For Moses Momanyi of Dawn 2 Dusk Farm, it's all about "the farming lifestyle," he says. "It's in me, and it's in my family." Almost every day throughout the summer, from "dawn to dusk," Moses and Rhona can be found at work in their fields, planting, harvesting, and weeding their crops, and looking after their two children, Faith and Neil. "My friends feel that they are way ahead of me," says Moses, "but I don't feel that way. It's not all about the money – it's about the lifestyle."

Dawn 2 Dusk Farm is a flourishing new business, with lots of room to grow. Moses and Rhona currently farm 3 acres of land and tend a flock of chickens. They sell their produce at four different farmers' markets, run their own 31-member CSA, and also maintain regular wholesale accounts. To get to this point has required a lot of intelligence and hard work, and they have literally built the farm from the ground up.



*Moses and Rhona having fun with kohlrabi*

"I grew up on a farm in rural western Kenya," explains Moses. "Everything we ate we grew," he says. After finishing high school, Moses rented his own land, and bought and sold corn and livestock. "I did a lot of business-oriented things in Kenya," he explains.

He brought his business skills with him to the United States, but at first, "I was in culture shock," he claims; "In Kenya life was not that structured." He found a job working nights at Wal-Mart, and later worked as a nurse-aid, a truck driver, and vacuum salesman. None of his jobs seemed to satisfy him. "Being a business person, I started thinking about what I wanted to do with my life," he says.

One day, Moses recalls, "I was driving truck and I saw some people working in a community garden." He was inspired, and rented three plots. He planted traditional Kenyan crops, such as nightshade, spider plant, and cowpeas, and sold them within the Kenyan community. The next year, he expanded to 11 plots, and the year after that, to 34 plots before the city limited him to 2. "I decided I could grow and make money," says Moses, and by this time, "I was determined to do farming." He began by going farm to farm and asking if anyone had an acre he could rent. "Some people thought I was crazy," he laughed.

Eventually he came across a group of immigrant farmers working with MFA. He connected, and after learning a little more about the training program, decided to apply for the 2008 season. Farming with MFA, Moses continued growing his Kenyan crops, but added on crops that were marketable for the Big River Farms CSA. Soon, he was connecting with wholesale accounts, and selling at mini-markets in the Twin Cities. At first, "We weren't able to get by with the income from the farm," he explains, so they worked side jobs in addition to farming. As Dawn 2 Dusk Farm grew, however, this began to change. For the first time, in 2013, "with whatever we made, we were able to sustain ourselves," he exclaims, and with all of the produce, they have "drastically scaled down our family budget."

Moses accredits the farm's success in large part to "My partner, Rhona," he says. "Her role has been very important." He also says success is about "having the right attitude." Additionally, "MFA has been very resourceful," he continues. "They have helped me to know that I can do this. If I hadn't come to MFA, I couldn't have figured out how to do wholesale, or the CSA, or farmers markets. It would have been very difficult." In the future, "I hope to buy my own land so my whole family will be free to run," Moses says. Learn more about Moses, Rhona, and Dawn 2 Dusk Farm at [www.dawn2duskfarm.com](http://www.dawn2duskfarm.com).



*Faith and Neil are always adorable!*