

Paula Foreman - Encore Farm

Paula discovered her desire to farm a few years ago, when it became important to her to go a step beyond supporting growers, to being one. She supports local growers, eating almost entirely local. She also has longed to live in great food culture and takes to heart Gandhi's advice to "be the change you want to see in the world". Now Paul contributes to a great food culture.

Many years ago, Paula began reading Wendell Berry and was moved by his discussions of caring for the land. She has always had a rural inclination - her first toys were tractors, and during her high school years, she spent weekends on a friend's farm. There was a no guest policy there, so she had the opportunity to help with fencing, milking, and haying.

In 2005 after attending a CSA fair at Seward Coop in Minneapolis, Paula began doing a work share at MFA and learned about the training program and began working through the process of thinking of herself as a farmer. In 2006, she worked with MFA staff in beginning to plan her farm goals and in 2007, she enrolled in the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings Course and graduated.

Paul has named her farm "Encore" because she is starting this farm venture in her mid-life and she and her husband think of this as a "second act". Currently Paula and her husband live in the city and are middle-aged, come to this with little farming experience and are doing it anyway. This says a lot about what kinds of things are possible.

Learning to farm is hard. Paula and her husband made a mid-life decision to do this and it isn't like you can go to school and learn to grow onions or tomatoes. Paula has had to learn by reading, going to conferences asking questions of anyone who will listen. The learning curve is steep. Paula works nights so figuring out how to balance work, farm work and sleep is a challenge. Her husband and her see each other when they work together in the field and Paula doesn't have time to see other friends.

Paula likes to say "a bad day on the farm is better than a good day in the office".