

Organic Farmers Market Extension at UGA



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Many families are starting to make an important change in their diets by putting organic meals on their tables. Organic food is defined as any food that abides by the organic guidelines, which includes being grown in soil that does not contain certain substances such as, herbicides and pesticides. As an effort to learn how organic produce goes from the farms to the dinner table, we went to Athens Farmers Market, and were lucky enough to get a hands-on experience with one of the farmers, Josh Johns.



Picture of us with Mr. Johns while selling produce at the farmer's market

Mr. Johns is part of the Collective Harvest and helps to run Hickory Hills Farms alongside his wife and her family. After attending the University of Georgia, he married his wife, Jennifer, and joined her and her family in the farming business. For him, farming was a bit of a learning curve, but after nearly six years of working in the industry, he has gotten the hang of it. According to Mr. Johns, the hardest crop for him to learn were carrots, but after trial and error, and after trying various types of fertilizers and organic pesticides, he was finally able to grow them. The crops that Johns grows are the ones that are in season, like tomatoes, potatoes, string beans, and okra, which sold out rather quickly.



Close-up shots of both carrots and potatoes that were sold at the market

Before every market, he weighs all his produce, and once the market is completed, he weighs the remaining produce. This process is required for every organic farm to be considered truly organic. If you think that is a lot of work for one man you would be right, and that is why "there are a total of nine workers on the farm," says Johns. Hickory Hills Farms have booths in both the Atlanta and Athens farmer's markets. While the Atlanta market is larger, the smaller size of the Athens market allows for a greater sense of community and because of that and his fresh produce, he has built a loyal clientele. Organic farms and farmers help our community and family in more ways than one, and they work hard behind the scenes to ensure that our families are eating the absolute best.



Some of the organic produce we sold at the market.