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# *Can you make a reasonable profit from a small farm u-pick flower operation?*



**David Coates**

**February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Knobstone Flower Farm**



# *Agenda*

## **01 Introduction**

Why a U-pick Flower Farm Operation?

## **02 Potential**

Revenue Through Diversification

## **03 Challenges**

Can you sell what you grow?

## **04 Reasonable Expectations**

What resources do you have?

## **05 Closing**

Verdict, Profit or Loss?





# 01 Introduction

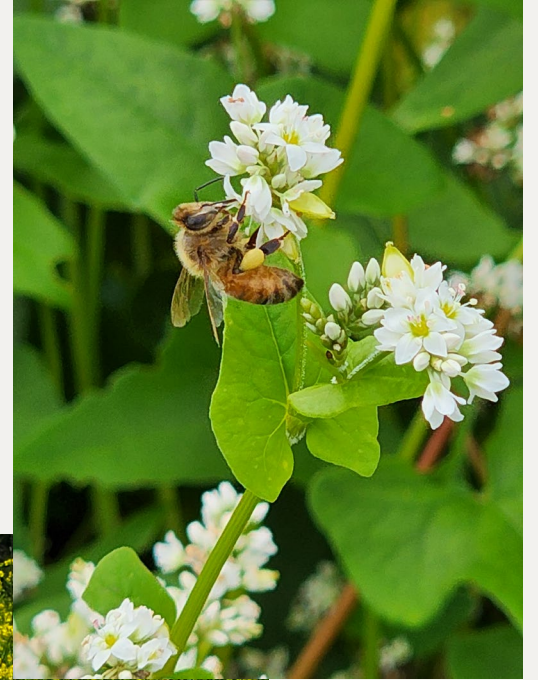
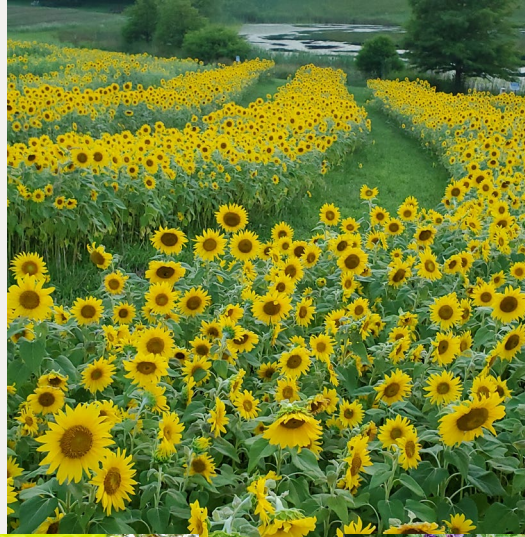
## ***Our Story***

- COVID-19 project, pivot from bourbon tours
- 0.5 acre cut flowers
- 5.0 acres wildflowers & sunflowers
- Regenerative farming techniques
- Open July through October, Saturdays & Sundays 1 pm to 5 pm, and by appointment
- Customers pick flowers, we arrange custom flower bouquets or wrap cut flowers in paper
- We sell experiences over a product





# Regenerative Farming Techniques





# 02 Potential

What are *YOUR* dreams for 2024? Is this the year you'll start your flower farming journey?

Psst, a quick "heads up"...you're the first to

| START FROM YOUR OWN BACKYARD!

## Make Money Selling Cut Flowers!

While flower farmers across the US are reporting average sales of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per acre, we know that this 100% depends on the type of market they're selling into, the region, and the skill set of the grower.

When Lynn Byczynski first authored [an article](#) on flower farming for *Mother Earth News* back in 2002, she estimated that "an acre of well-grown and marketed flowers is worth approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 in sales." Fifteen years later, cut flowers continue to be one of the highest-grossing crops you can grow per acre. Utilizing small-scale, high-intensity production techniques, my farm, Floret, has been able to gross \$55,000 to \$60,000 per acre in good years, even when we've sold the bulk of our flowers at wholesale prices. By offering wedding flowers and design services, we're able to include an additional \$25,000 to \$30,000 worth of value-added revenue to our farm each year.

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### FLOWER FARMING

*The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide to Raising and Selling Cut Flowers*

Cut flowers are one of the most profitable crops you can grow, with growers across the United States reporting sales of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per acre. This book contains all the essential information you need -- planting, tending, harvesting, pricing, and selling flowers. It provides guidance on commercial production methods, and offers insights into the many marketing opportunities available to flower growers: farmers markets, florists, supermarkets, wholesalers, pick-your-own, weddings, and more. If flowers are in your future, you can't afford to be without it!



# 02 Potential

Perception is everything!

Increased revenue comes from diversification.

You need to continuously reinvent or add to your business to stay relevant.

- You will need to reinvest back into your business.
- Increased revenues mean more people, are you ready for that?
- People are looking to spend money. If you do not offer value added products, then they take that money home.
- Good partnerships can add to your ability to attract more customers.
- Your business need to look like you're in the business to stay in the business.





# The Value of Great Customer Service and Amazing Flower Arrangements





# If you going to offer a u-pick flower farm experience, it helps to like people!



*"They were so nice helped me pick my flowers and the price was so reasonable! Felt like they truly cared"*

*"My daughter and I went yesterday for our first visit. We were greeted with smile and the process of picking was explained. We were personally walked through and shown the layout of the gardens. Absolutely lovely experience all the way around. We will definitely be going back!"*



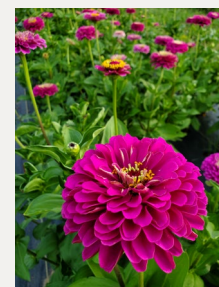
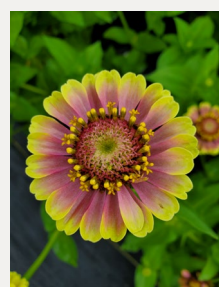
*"Been here a couple times and always a pleasant experience. That's exactly what this place is- an experience. It's always memorable and the owners are ridiculously nice and informative. Feels very welcoming and a relaxed environment."*

*"David and his wife were super friendly they helped us out so much because we honestly has no clue what to expect. I felt like family here and would definitely return thank you for a great family fun. Prettiest sun flowers I have ever seen at an incredible price!"*



# Knobstone Flower Farm – Year Over Year Revenue

Season	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	\$9,312	\$15,168	\$18,849	\$20,459
Average Sale	\$17.87	\$24.43	\$28.91	\$34.49
Net Profit *	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Credit Card Usage	21%	34%	42%	59%
Facebook Followers	1,981	3,706	4,957	6,200





So why are your net profits zero, and possibly losses?





# 03 Challenges

## #1 Time

**Your available time is the limiting factor in revenue generation.**

**Excellent time management skills are essential!**

## #2 Marketing

**Rule of Three**

- 1/3 growing**
- 1/3 marketing**
- 1/3 selling**

**Your success depends on how well you keep your story in front of your customers!**



## #3 Prep

**You will spend more time prepping than you think!**

- Succession Planting
- Watering
- Mowing / Trimming
- Weeding
- Deadheading
- Shopping
- Financials
- Answering Questions
- Setup & Cleanup



## #4 Season

**Primary season is July through October. Season extension is required to add additional revenue. The good news is that your customer base has already been developed!**



## #5 ROI

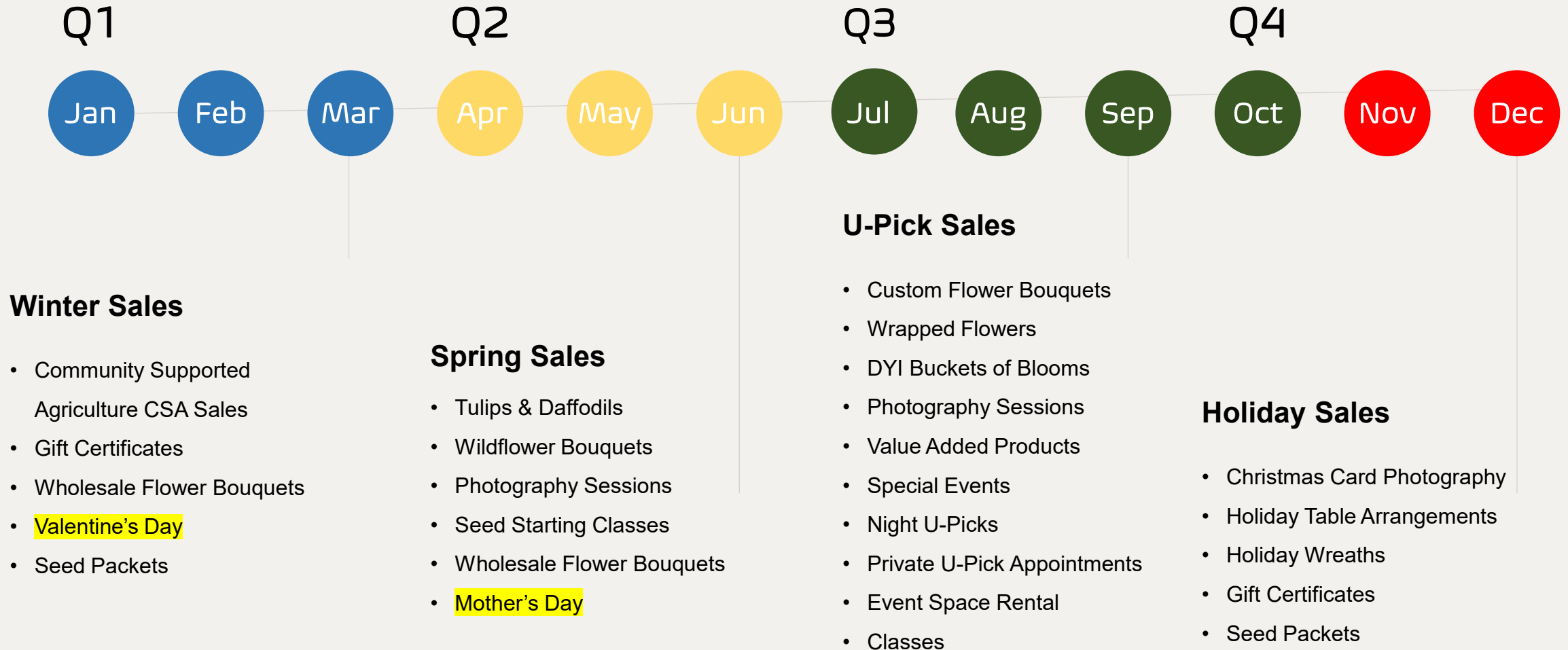
**It takes time to build a brand.**

**You need to give people a reason to share their experiences, tell their family and friends, and to come back for future visits.**



# Monthly Revenue Timeline

## *Potential Season Extension Opportunities*





# Reasonable Expectations

- Flower farming is not easy. You really need to love be outside, sweating, working harder than you thought possible and pushing yourself far beyond your comfort zone.
- To make a reasonable profit, you need to be able to deal with people.
- It takes a long time with consistent efforts to build a brand.
- You will spend (invest) more money than you ever expected.
- You will be disappointed at times!
- People will say really nice things about your work, and you will be pleased. Regrettably, that often does not pay the bills.
- If you are not making money, then you will realize at some point that it is not worth continuing.
- You may need to extend the season to make a reasonable profit.
- You will need to price your products in a manner that reflects the costs and work that goes into producing them.
- If you are consistently work at it, great things will happen.
- You will be thrilled beyond expectation when things are going well!





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# Value Added Products – Flower Seeds & Cover Crops





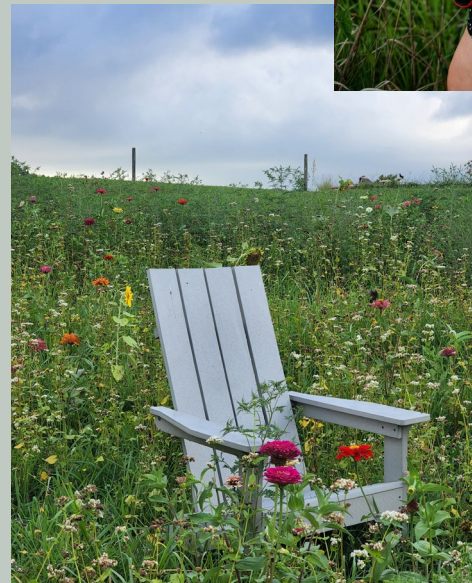
# Value Added Flower Soil Blocks & Potted Perennials





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# Photography Sessions





# Children's Workshop – Plant the Field





# Lighten Up After Dark U-Pick Experience





*The experience is more important than the products!*





# The art and joy of successful advertising





# A move to more experience events!



## August 2023 U-Pick Revenue

Week 1 = \$1,157  
Week 2 = \$1,087  
Week 3 = \$1,176  
Week 4 = \$ 788  
Week 5 = \$ 972

**Total Revenue = \$5,180**

## August 2023 U-Pick Costs

Supplies & Fees = \$415  
Labor = \$375  
Advertising = \$200  
Insurance = \$125  
Sanitation = \$50

**Total Costs = \$1,165**

## August 2023 U-Pick Profit

**Profit = \$4,015**



## Sunflower Music Festival Revenue

500 tickets x \$29 = \$14,500  
Flower sales = \$1,200  
Value added product sales = \$300

**Total One Day Revenue = \$16,000**

## Sunflower Music Festival Costs

Band Fees + Tips = \$2,500  
Insurance = \$500  
Parking Labor = \$500  
40' x 80' Event Tent = \$450  
(4 events/year x 5 years)  
Sanitation = \$300  
Porta Potty & Handwash Sinks  
Miscellaneous Costs = \$300  
Advertising = \$250  
Supplies = \$250

**Total One Day Costs = \$5,050**

## Sunflower Music Festival Profit

**Profit = \$10,950**



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# Summary



**Your time is your biggest challenge**

Great time management is essential to profitability

**Diversification of products is key**

Tap into several potential sources of revenue

**It's essential to market & build your brand**

1/3 time to grow, 1/3 time to market, 1/3 time to sell

**Key decisions focus on making money**

Understand COGs and profit margins

**Make customer engagement a priority**

Great customer service is the pillar of success

**Your business will change over time**

Be willing to pivot to activities that increase revenue

**Pay as you go and pay yourself**

Your time has value, and your farm will grow if you patiently reinvest back into it.

**Enjoy what you are doing**

Remember, you own the business, and the business should not own you.



# 05 Verdict



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