

Summer Harvest offers fresh flour, wheat products

Have you ever had toasted wheat berries? Fresh ground whole wheat flour? Locally made pancake mix?

All this and more are available through a new family farm venture called Summer Harvest. Ryan and Annje Esvelt grow several varieties of wheat at their farm near Daisy, which they have traditionally sold on the open wheat market. Using an on-site grinder, the family also ground the wheat for their own use and to give as holiday gifts.

The recipients of the fresh flour, wheat berries (wheat kernels) and pancake mix loved the flavor and quality and encouraged the couple to sell to the public.

With so much positive feedback, Ryan and Annje decided to launch their own line of wheat products under the label "Summer Harvest." The products are sold at the Wednesday and Saturday Farmers' Markets in Colville.

Annje said the response has been "great" so far. They are looking forward to sharing the unique benefits of their products with others.

Robust, superior flavor because there are no preservatives.

"Our flour has a real robust and superior flavor because it is fresh ground, grown locally and doesn't have any preservatives," she said. "Since we grow, harvest and process our own product, there is also no middle man to inflate the price. What you get is a high protein product packed with flavor."

The Esvelts, in conjunction with some relatives, grow both hard red and soft white winter wheat that gives them several product options. The spring and summer wheat crops are usually fine ground into an all-purpose flour and the hard, red winter wheat is used in a coarse grind for bread flour. Wheat berries, dried herbs, and bundled wheat stalks for decoration will all be available at the Summer Harvest stand this year.

As dryland farmers who depend on the rain to water the wheat, the Esvelts have been encouraged by the wet weather this month.

"The rain has done wonders for our wheat crop," Annje shared.

To help manage the 250 acres of wheat, the couple employs integrated pest management to help deter insects. The integrated plan includes rotating crops to prevent bugs or plant viruses from having a chance to get established in the crop, therefore limiting the need for pesticides or other chemicals.

Since the couple also saves their own seeds for the next year's planting, there are no Genetically Modified crops grown on the acreage.

"We do everything here on site and don't outsource for seeds or processing," Annie said.

Kitchen trials

Annje said the family has been undertaking a lot of in-home kitchen trials for their products, which means she has lots of ideas to share.

"For our wheat berries, they can be added to soups or chilis or salads. They can also be soaked, salted and then toasted for a nutty flavored snack," she said. "We make our own bread with the coarse ground wheat flour and have found the all-purpose flour to be universal for recipes without having to add anything extra."

For more information about the Summer Harvest products, visit the Esvelt's stand at either of the

Colville Farmers Markets or contact Annje by calling 738-4859 or by email at: summerharvestLLC@gmail.com.

