

Historic Zinniker Farm Seeks New Lead Farmer

Zinniker Farm is the oldest, continually operated biodynamic farm in the United States and has played a huge role in the development of both the organic and biodynamic farming movements. The farm has 164 certified organic acres, thriving beef and poultry enterprises, and incredibly vital soil. At present we are seeking a farmer/farm family to help Mark and Petra Zinniker steward the farm into the future. On-farm housing is available and a strong consumer group (The Zinniker Farm Stewardship Association) has formed that is in the process of developing an innovative CSA type model for the future of the farm. See below for more information about this opportunity. Or click [here](#) to apply.

The Farm and its History

- Mark and Petra Zinniker are the third generation of Zinnikers to steward this land which has been under biodynamic management since 1943 and has been OTCO certified organic since the year 2000.
- The farm has 164 acres, 120 acres tillable, approx. 15 acres of woodland, permanent pasture, and riparian buffers in a slightly rolling landscape. Flowing hills give a beautiful view over the land. There is a small creek running through the farm, surrounded by trees and multi species tree-lines. The whole property is surrounded by tree-lines that help prevent drift from non-organic farms.
- Located in Southeast Wisconsin in the middle of the golden triangle of Milwaukee, Madison, and Chicago. Prairie Hill Waldorf School is 25 miles away.
- Surrounding area includes 800+ acres of certified organic land.
- Various organizations have conducted research and development activities on the farm including the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, the Mandaamin Institute, U-IL, U-WI, and Upper Midwest Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT).
- The farm has hosted dozens of interns and volunteers from the US and abroad over several decades.
- The farm holds regular field days, festivals, and other educational events.





The Enterprises

- The farm currently produces grass-fed beef, pasture pork, free-range eggs, honey, mushrooms, and soap for direct sale to a community of long-term, loyal customers, many of whom live in Chicago.
- These consumers are currently in the process of forming a new type of CSA called the Zinniker Farm Stewardship Association (ZFSA), which will help steward the farm into the future financially. [Click here](#) to learn more about ZFSA.
- The farm also produces all 9 biodynamic preparations, as well as biochar, indigenous microorganisms, and other regenerative farming inputs.
- The farm has scope to grow the existing enterprises and begin new enterprises, such as vegetables, flowers, herbs, or other livestock, e.g. sheep or goats.

What We are Seeking

- Mark and Petra Zinniker are seeking to step back from full-time farming into a more supportive role within the next few years. This transition could happen more quickly or more slowly depending on the needs and capacities of the new farmer/s.
- Our ideal candidate would bring significant farming experience and would be in a position to take on the existing enterprises and add new enterprises to the farm. We are open to working with, and helping train, a farmer with less experience, as long as they bring some relevant farm and life experience, working capital, and a strong commitment to a long-term relationship.
- Our ideal candidate will want to work with the Zinniker Farm Stewardship Association to take the farm into the future, but we will also consider proposals from farmers who want to run a completely independent enterprise on the farm.
- Our ideal candidate would have an interest and knowledge in biodynamic practices and will want to continue to further this knowledge to enhance biodynamic applications.
- In any scenario, a key thing we are seeking is commitment to a soil and land stewardship ethic that aligns with our own (see below).
- Other qualities we are seeking:
 - Well organized, warm, friendly, open, and flexible

- Honest and with a good work ethic
- Good communicator and problem solver



What we Can Offer:

- On-farm housing
- A deeply committed consumer group willing to invest in the future of the farm
- A diversified farm in an ideal location, with established enterprises and incredibly healthy soil
- Long-term tenancy
- Guidance and mentoring from our deep well of experience
- The opportunity to bring your own vision and help shape the future of this historic farm

Our Land Stewardship Ethic and Practices

- **The soil is the foundation of the farm:** we believe in making continual investments in the health of the soil.
- **Farmland should stay farmland:** we are committed to keeping this land in organic and biodynamic farming.
- **Closed nutrient loops:** all feed for the animals is raised on the farm, and all fertility comes from the farm (i.e., we use minimal off-farm inputs).
- **Holistic health is the model for agriculture:** we use the biodynamic preparations and other natural remedies to stimulate the immune system of the farm and its living organisms.
- **Grass-based systems:** we raise our animals on grass using holistic grazing management

Click [here](#) to apply to be the new farmer at Zinniker Farm.