



Local FLAVOR

Triple H Family Farm of Postville, Iowa

The Co-op
welcomes Triple
H Family Farm of
Postville. Hear about
this family-owned
business directly from
owner Brent Strahm here:

Welcome to Triple H Family Farm! After moving from Oregon in 2008, we made our home on a five-acre farm nestled in the rolling hills between Elgin & Postville. As of 2023, our family includes 12 children, eight girls and four boys, ranging from 18-year-old twins, Kathryn & Carolyn, down to 17-month-old Joanna. Aside from raising tomatoes, we enjoy tending a flock of laying hens, milking our own cow, and managing a large garden.

After graduating from our homeschool in 2022, Kathryn & Carolyn decided to become full-time managers of our new hydroponic tomato business. We bought our greenhouses from an acquaintance who has nearly 30 years of tomato-raising experience. His helpful advice and guidance have been essential in getting us off to a good start. After relocating the greenhouses, piece by piece, from their property (over an hour away) to ours, the adventure began. From pouring concrete and tying rebar (sometimes by moonlight!) to setting the hoop structure in place, most of the family participated in some way, learning lessons in working together as well as construction skills. Although we purchased two greenhouses, we only erected one for the present year and have hopes of expanding and including other hydroponic produce in the future.

In January 2023, while northeast Iowa was yet in winter's grip, we were busy planting over 1000 tomato seeds in our basement. About a month later, we moved the little plants into their permanent home in the greenhouse. Since then, Kathryn and Carolyn have kept quite busy learning how to keep the plants happy and healthy. They continually monitor the greenhouse heating, cooling and watering systems, checking and adjusting water nutritional values, temperature and humidity levels three times daily. The other children also assist in a multitude of ways and have become a reliable source of help to their older sisters. We prefer hydroponics due to our ability to control the growing environment. We enjoy hand picking tomatoes when red and at peak ripeness, as doing so provides a fresher product with amazing taste.

Kathryn and Carolyn, also known as "The Tomato Twins," attend several local farmers' markets and are working at establishing a market in local grocery stores. They also continue to work one day per week at their former jobs - Rolling Hills Hydroponic Greenhouse (Kathryn) and Country View Dairy (Carolyn). They've learned a lot since assuming the management position at Triple H Family Farm including money management, attention to detail, interpersonal skills, and record keeping. They're also practicing deep character traits like patience, diligence and perseverance - all of which are required when growing and nurturing plants. Raising tomatoes isn't without its challenges.

In spite of the long hours and hard work, Kathryn and Carolyn say it's worth it all when they can reap a bountiful harvest of beautiful, ripe tomatoes. It is our desire as a family to continue to provide farm fresh produce to our community both now and in the years to come, one tomato at a time.

