

BIRDS

1. How do the falcons scare off the other birds?
Their trainers will fly them in an area and the other birds think they are hunting them so they are scared away. The falcons do not hurt the other birds, just by them flying in the area makes the other birds think they are hunting them so they leave.
2. How do they scare off the birds at night?
They do not fly at night because most of the birds are sleeping.
3. Why don't the falcons eat the seeds?
Falcons are birds of prey and eat other animals as their diet.
4. How long do the falcons stay at your farm?
They stay with us for a growing season. Here in Arizona that is from October through March.
5. What types of hawks are used for bird control?
Saker Falco, Prairie Falcon, Harris Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Barbary Falcon, Aplomado Falcon.



6. Why don't you use a scarecrow?
Because the birds that are eating our seeds figure out very fast that they do not need to be afraid of the scarecrow because it is not real and will not hurt them.
7. How many hawks do you use to keep the birds away? How long are the hawks out there (days/weeks/months)?
The company we use has about 12-15 birds they bring to our farm to fly on a daily basis from sun up to sun down. They bring this many so that get rotated and do not get super tired by flying all the time.

FARM/CROPS

8. How many kinds of crops are there? How many do you grow?
There are hundreds and hundreds of different crops. Think about all the fruits, vegetables and grains (like rice and wheat) there are...all of these are different crops. Right now we only grow kale, lettuces, greens, spinach, arugula and herbs.

9. Is there anything you grow beside lettuce? Why can't/don't you grow different crops?
Why do you only grow lettuce?

Answered in questions #8 and #17

10. Why did you start growing lettuce?

Because it grows very well here in AZ...in fact most of the lettuce that people eat across the United States in the winter time is grown in AZ, mainly Yuma, AZ. And, there is a BIG demand for lettuce so we know we can sell our crops.

11. What is your favorite thing that you grow?

The baby lettuces because they grow fast and it is one of the best crops we grow.

12. What is the tallest plant that you grow?

Swiss Chard



13. How are the crops picked? Does a machine harvest the crops?

Our herbs have to be harvested by hand so we have people who harvest that crop. We harvest our lettuces, greens, spinach, arugula and kale with a machine because we harvest 1 million pounds a week!!



14. How do you put the seeds in the ground?

We use a planter that plants our seeds. We plant millions of seeds so we need a machine to get it all done!!



15. How many people helpers do you have at your Arizona farm?

About 350 people

16. How do you harvest your lettuce?

We harvest our lettuce using a harvester that mows it like grass. See the picture in question #13.

17. Why do you only grow vegetables?

Right now we only grow vegetables but we have grown strawberries, melons, blackberries and even apples, plums, pears and peaches on our farm in the past. We change what we grow based on market demand or maybe a customer will ask us to grow something new for them.

18. How do you get all the lettuce fields watered in 1 day?

We have an irrigation system and a team of people that their job is to water the crops every day. You do not need to water everything every day...you may only water every other day or every couple of days depending on weather and the crop you are growing.



19. Do you still offer field trips to your farm? How do we sign up for one if so!
Yes we do...you just call our farm and ask for Patty Emmert and she will help schedule a tour.
20. How much lettuce do the grocery stores ask for?
It changes season to season but usually they ask for about 1 million pounds a week from our farm.
21. When do you plant? When do you harvest?
We start planting our crops here in Arizona in September and we begin harvesting in October and we continue to plant and harvest all season long through March/April depending on weather.
22. Why do the tractors all look different? Are they used for different things?
Yes, we have some tractors that are used to do tillage and other tractors we use in planting and other tractors that are used in harvest.
23. How do you know that the crops are good?
The most important way to know if our crops are good is to make sure they are safe to eat. We test our water, we test our soil and we test our plants all before we harvest them to make sure they are free from any pathogens that would cause someone to get sick if they eat it. We also do visual inspections on plants to make sure they do not have a lot of bugs or bug bites in the leaves.
24. Do you have volunteers help?
No, all of the people that work on our farm get paid so we do not use any volunteers.
25. What is an acre?
An acre is a unit of land area that is approximately 43,560 square feet.
26. Why do we plant more vegetable than fruit in the winter?
It depends upon where you are growing but in Arizona the main fruit crops we grow in the winter is citrus. We can grow strawberries in the winter, too. Apples are grown in the Fall. We just happen to grow vegetables so that is why we do not grow any fruit right now.

27. What do you mean by organic?

Organic food is the product of a farming system which avoids the use of man-made fertilizers or pesticides. You still use sprays to help with getting rid of bugs and disease but they have to be organic compounds and approved in order to Certified Organic.

28. What is the width of dirt between each row of plants?

It depends on what type of plant we are growing but for our lettuces we typically grow 48 lines on a 64" bed and try to keep the distance between the lines at 1.25"

29. Do you have any animals at the farm?

No we do not (with the exception of the Falcons) because our food safety rules do not allow us to have animals on the farm.

30. How much seed do you need?

We will use over 300,000 lbs of seed during our season in Goodyear.

31. Does your field have to be a certain length for you to grow things?

Not necessarily but we do like to try and keep all our rows around 1200 feet long so that we are efficient with tillage, planting, irrigation and harvesting.

32. What other things do you plant between lettuce seasons? What do you plant for each season?

Here in Goodyear we plant Sudan Grass in the off season to help regenerate the soil. It also grows fast and has a long root system that can go deep and "mine" nitrogen and bring it back to the surface where the plants will be able to utilize it. Another really good thing about Sudan Grass is that it does not take a lot of water to grow it and it grows thick and chokes out weed growth.

33. What is green waste?

Green waste, also called agricultural **waste**, is biodegradable **waste** that can be composed of compostable wastes, such as grass and flower cuttings, hedge trimmings, fallen leaves, dead plant matter, as well as domestic and commercial food wastes.

34. How do you plant the seeds?

Answered in #14

35. What are micro-organisms?

Those little creatures partying on your fingers are a microorganism called bacteria.

Gross, right? Well, not exactly. Bacteria live almost everywhere, including in our stomachs, dirt, and in your favorite meal. And a lot of them are actually good for us.

Good bacteria in our stomachs help us to digest the food we eat. Other bacteria found in soil help break down dead leaves and other things to make that soil rich and useful for plants to grow in.

But beware - some bacteria are harmful, like ones that can cause your food to go bad or make you sick. It's important to keep your body and the things around you clean so that you can avoid exposing yourself to these harmful bacteria.

36. How many people does it take to plant the seeds?

There is typically 3 people planting. One to drive the tractor, and 1-2 on the back of the planter loading seed and making sure it is dispensing the seeds correctly.

37. When did you start contract growing?

We started contract growing around 17 years ago.

38. How many people work on the farm?

In Goodyear we have about 350 people working on the farm.

FERTILIZER

39. How much chicken "poo" do you use for fertilizer in a year?

8000 tons of chicken "poo" and we get it all from Hlckmans!

40. Did you always use chicken and cow poop as fertilizer? Ever use anything else?

Always chicken and sometimes liquid fish (fish emulsion).

41. How much compost do you use?

We use 34,000 tons of compost annually which is = to 1545 semi truckloads of compost.

42. Why can't/don't you use store bought fertilizer?

We do buy fertilizer but we make our own compost because we like to cure it a lot longer than commercial compost so that it is ready to give all the nutrients to our plants and help them grow into strong/healthy plants.

43. How do you use the fertilizer?

We spread it on our fields to help our plants grow into healthy strong plants that can resist pests and disease.

44. How long does it take to make the fertilizer?

It takes about 9 months to fully cure our compost.

45. Is making fertilizer an on-going process?

We are making our compost year round, every day!