



Desert Premium Farms

John and Alicia Boelts live and farm in Yuma, Arizona with their 3 kids. John is a 5th generation US farmer, but his farming ancestry can be traced back 14 generations with family in Germany! John is the Grower and Manager for Desert Premium Farms. He and Alicia farm in partnership with their good friends Kent and Jenny Inglett. They started the farm 11 years ago. Prior to that, they both partnered with different farms for nearly 15 years. John and his partner farm approximately 2,500 acres of fruits and vegetables, 1,200 acres of cotton, wheat, alfalfa, sudangrass and other crops each year with the help of 30-50 employees. The varieties of lettuce he produces are head, romaine, butterhead, red leaf and green leaf. When it comes to fruit and other vegetables, his farm grows cantaloupe, hami, honeydew, cauliflower, broccoli, cilantro, and vegetable seed crops. Because of the climate in Yuma, and farmers ability to rotate crops, planting and harvesting is a year-round job for John on his farm.

John's favorite thing about farming is he knows that he is producing quality food and fiber for not only his family, but for families across the country, and even around the world. John says that lettuce is a challenging crop to grow because they do it in the winter, which represents unique weather complications. For example, the cold weather the last few weeks means they really have to watch their water delivery. If the temperature is too hot, they need water to keep the crop from wilting. If it is too cold, they need water on the crop to keep it from frost. Lettuce farmers are always on their toes! John and his partner pre-contract most all of their fruit and vegetables, which means they grow them specifically to meet the requirements of particular stores and restaurants. You can find his lettuce at a lot of supermarkets, schools, and restaurants from fine steak and seafood houses to McDonalds, Burger King, and Panera Bread across the US and Canada.

When asked what the most challenging part of farming is' "having enough workers and staying profitable!"