

Adam/Maggie Pounds – Simple Abundance Farm

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

"How big is your farm?" "It's about 4 by 8." "Oh...4 by 8 acres?" "No, 4 by 8 feet." That imaginary conversation sounds like an unlikely discussion between Kansas farmers, but it illustrates how one young couple got their start in urban farming. They started raising microgreens on a 4 by 8 sheet of plywood. Now this innovative young couple is expanding their operation to provide local food while serving their community. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Adam and Maggie Pounds are the founders of Simple Abundance Farm in South Hutchinson, Kansas. Adam grew up at Hutchinson and went to Wichita State. Maggie went to high school at the nearby rural community of Buhler, population 1,289 people. Now, that's rural. She went on to Bethel College.

Adam and Maggie met through friends and ultimately married. "We caught the travel bug," Adam said. They worked a summer at Estes Park and then in Key West, Florida doing eco-tourism. Adam and Maggie are also talented musicians, playing guitar and multiple folk instruments. "Maggie sings like an angel," Adam said.

The young couple traveled and played music. While visiting friends in the Pacific northwest, they decided to focus on the principles which were important to them: Community, intentional living, healthy food, and an active lifestyle. They apprenticed at an organic farm in Washington state.

"As you're traveling, you see life through a different lens," Maggie said. Their passion for a healthy, local food system grew. They moved back to Kansas to put this into practice.

In winter 2014, they started growing microgreens in South Hutchinson. "Our whole farm consisted of a 4x8 sheet of plywood," Adam said. Seeds were planted in compost on trays. Plants were harvested very young. "Microgreens are tender, nutty, and tasty," Adam said. They now have a high tunnel for additional vegetable production.

They produce sunflowers, peas, radishes, urugula, spinach, salad greens, kale, and more. "We use natural and sustainable methods to produce high yields on a minimal amount of land while protecting the environment," Adam said.

Back when they were still interns but wanting to start a farm of their own, Maggie and Adam were on a farm tour in the northwest. While in one grower's home, they saw a cross-stitch design on the wall that said "Simply Abundant." The term clicked for both of them. When they got back to Kansas, they named their place Simple Abundance Farm.

The "farm" is a specialty crop operation on less than an acre in the city of South Hutchinson. "We are urban, so we're very convenient for our consumers," Adam said. "The city has been really great to work with us," he said.

"They've been an amazing addition to our Reno County Farmers' Market," said Pam Paulsen, K-State Research and Extension - Reno County horticulture agent. "We are huge advocates of farmer's markets," Adam said. They have also opened what they call the Farm Stand, which is a self-service market for

their farm crops and other local products year-round. “Our customers get a key code so they can pick up products at their convenience,” Adam said.

They are now building a commercial kitchen which will enable them to produce shelf-stable products such as sauerkraut and kimchi. They’re also joining the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s From the Land of Kansas program.

Meanwhile, they’re caring for their two-year old son Arlo. “We call him quality control, he’s out there in the dirt,” Adam said.

Maggie is President of the newly formed Central Kansas Young Farmers Coalition. She also recently lobbied for the farm bill with the National Young Farmers Coalition in Washington DC.

“We need to support one another, whether a farmer or consumer, to forge a path for local food production,” Maggie said.

For more information, go to www.simpleabundance.farm.

How big is your farm? This innovative young couple got a start on a 4 by 8 sheet of plywood. Now they are producing a wide variety of fresh and flavorful produce. We salute Maggie and Adam Pounds – and Arlo too – for making a difference with their approach to urban agriculture. Their farmground may be small, but their vision is tremendous.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.