

Meet the Farmers: Olen Youngman Owner, Youngman Orchards Williamson, N.Y.

Olen Youngman is a third-generation farmer. His family has been farming in the same Western New York fields since 1922, growing fruits such as apples, cherries, peaches, plums, nectarines and more. Youngman took over the family farm in 1990 from his father. He has been a staple at the Downtown Farmers Market ever since.

Youngman drives 130 miles round-trip every Tuesday from Williamson to Downtown Syracuse to participate in the Downtown Farmers Market, but says he doesn't mind the time he spends in the truck.

"We just like coming to the Farmers Market. It's good for our business. It's not a large part of our income, but it's a part of it. We enjoy doing it, and we enjoy the people," Youngman says.

Whether it's interacting with the other farmers, or exchanging pleasantries with regular customers, Youngman says talking with people is his favorite part about the Downtown Farmers Market.

"I really like interacting with the people. [We've] built up a good clientele here, and we just like seeing the people every week," he says.

Many visitors return faithfully week after week. Even with rain on opening day of The Market last week, the customers still made it a point to say hello.

"We had a lot of people stop by, and say, 'Hey, welcome back. Glad the market started.' They're glad to come back to The Market. They enjoy it," he says with a smile.

Youngman says one of the things he hears most often from customers is how much they appreciate being able to buy fresh produce directly from the farmers. They tell him they like to know what they're getting, and where it's coming from.

Though he says there is some flexibility, Youngman stays busy all year long. "Whether we're fertilizing, trimming trees, or harvesting, there's always something going on at the farm."

And the business is a family-affair.

Look for Youngman's daughter, Mikayla, certain Tuesdays throughout the summer. You might recognize her already. A former Dairy Princess for Wayne County, she brought a dairy calf to The Market last year. She will be studying beef and livestock studies as part of the animal science program at SUNY Cobleskill this fall. She hopes to expand her knowledge of the industry so she can continue to help out at the farm.

Be sure to say hello to Olen and Mikayla at the Downtown Farmers Market.



Olen Youngman and his daughter, Mikayla at the Downtown Farmers Market

