

CARES Recipient Profile



THIS FARM
CARES



Farm: Tater Farms

Location: Hastings, St. Johns County

Date of Origination: 1975

Commodities: Potatoes and sod

Frank C. Johns, Jr. and his family began farming in Hastings in 1975, proudly producing potatoes and sod. For the last several years, family friend Eric Hjort has served as general manager, overseeing every aspect of the farm, from planting to harvesting.

The Johns family implements Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their farm. BMPs are a set of guidelines that advise producers on how to manage the water, nutrient, and pesticides they are using to reduce agriculture's impact on the state's natural resources. Tater Farms has taken proactive steps to eliminate excess fertilizer from directly entering local water sources by using a banding fertilizer applicator. This applicator accurately places fertilizer at the base of the plant. Tater Farms has also installed a center pivot irrigation system which uses 75% less water than traditional irrigation and reduces runoff. They have also installed a new system called an Irri-Drain, which is used to reduce the amount of water needed to irrigate.

The Johns Family is actively involved in their local community. They regularly attend Community Bible Church in St. Augustine. Eric Hjort is part of the Sod Advisory Committee for the Florida Farm Bureau as well as a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Council.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Johns responded, "it is important for everyone to protect the environment as best they can because everyone lives within the environment. Without a healthy environment we would be out of work."