



HIGH WATER
M A R K

Aquaponics FAQ Sheet

For supporters and connections.

Why are you interested in aquaponics?

- Aquaponics is very similar to hydroponics.
- Hydroponics is growing plants with water amended with nutrients.
- Aquaponics is growing plants and fish. The fish provide most of the nutrients.
- Ruth grew up in Leamington, Ontario with family doing hydroponics.
- The hydroponic greenhouse industry in that area competes on a global scale.
- Ruth did significant research preparing a 15 page seminar about the industry.
- Noah grew up in Phoenix, AZ and visited Biosphere 2.
- His interest in ecosystems influenced his education and attitude toward farming.
- For the last ten years we have been researching, experimenting and planning.

What background do you have in business?

- About Ruth:
 - She received a B.A. from Goshen College.
 - She majored in art with a concentration in graphic design.
 - She minored in multimedia communications.
 - She has worked with many small businesses/organizations.
 - She has freelanced as a designer for 12 years.
 - She ran her own successful Mary Kay business for several years.
- About Noah:
 - Noah attended Goshen College.
 - Noah interned with Clay Bottom Farm.
 - Noah has taken the ASSETS business course at Goshen College.
 - Noah has been involved with the Economy of Communion in Freedom (EoC).
 - The EoC is the “business arm” of the Focolare Movement.
 - The Focolare Movement is an international movement promoting unity.

Why move forward on this now?

- In 2014 Noah found a successful aquaponics system unlike many others.
- This system is different from others in these ways:
 - The plant/fish ratio is more balanced, many systems “overcrowd” the fish.
 - The system is built from standard construction materials.
 - This system is the first to be certified organic.
 - This business is now sharing their knowledge with others.

How much food will come out of this system?

- Approximately 400 lb. of produce per month, up to 500 lb. per month.
- Approximately 20 lb. of fish per month.
- These numbers are based on full production.
- It will take a business quarter for produce to be in full production.
- It will take nearly a business year for fish to be in full production.
- This is after the system is built, balanced and running at a full capacity.

How organic are we talking?

- The system is certifiable organic.
- We will apply additional testing.
- We plan to exceed the basic requirements for certified organic food.

Who will buy your produce?

- Relationships with various local distributors are being developed.
- Including: Maple City Market, the Farmer’s Market, and Kercher’s Orchards.
- We are looking to further develop our distribution network.

How much competition will you have?

- Our plan is to fill out the market for local organic produce.
- This is especially true of the off-season, we plan to grow year round.
- Friendly competition is a part of business.
- We plan on working to help meet the needs of the market in our area.

What are you planning to grow?

- Talking with distributors: greens, peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers.
- Probably some specialty items.

How do you plan to balance your work load?

- Our vision is to bring art, design and aquaponics “under one roof.”
- We have already begun developing the idea of the “Smucker Homestead.”
- We plan to have the home be the nucleus for work and family.
- The art/design portion falls under the name “Nacho Group.”
- The aquaponics portion falls under the name “High Water Mark.”
- These are being promoted through a website, social media, and newsletters.
- Feel free to find out more at smuckerhomestead.com
- Noah will continue in a formal job, and help with the aquaponics.
- Ruth will continue in art/design.
- The aquaponics will become a primary focus of our work.

What is your plan for startup capital?

- We plan to sell approximately 12 long-term CSA-style shares.
- CSA is Community Supported Agriculture.
- Cost per share is \$2000.00 for 5 lb. of produce per month over 5 years.
- Contracts will include further details.

How much produce will be going to the long-term shares?

- Approximately 15% of the produce would be reserved for these shares.

Will there be a social aspect to this?

- We plan to grow this business into an EoC business.
- That means a portion of our profits will go to supporting other EoC business.
- It also means that a portion of our profits will go to supporting charitable works.