

# Fond du Lac County Success from the Field

## Produce With a Purpose

### Background

Richard Slager, of the Empire Township in Fond du Lac County, Wis., is an advocate for producing healthy fruits and vegetables while teaching people about sustainable agriculture. He and his wife, Dawn, are passionate about few things.

One, they realize the effects of what poor food has done to their local communities. “Most kids don't realize where their food comes from,” explained Slager. Two, is their love for Africa. Since 2000, Richard and Dawn have been actively involved in a continent close to their hearts. Since 2001, Rick has spent a considerable amount of time in West Africa working in agriculture. With that, Produce With Purpose Farm was born.

Rick and Dawn realize the importance of protecting the environment and creating sustainable agriculture methods. Increasing quality and sustainable production on their farm in the U.S. spills over in other parts of the world, as they partner with small and medium size farms in Africa to provide assistance and agriculture education. This passion inspired the Slagers to name their farm Produce with Purpose.

“We love diversity. We believe that not all carrots are orange and potatoes, brown. We love to educate people on the value of eating healthy and encouraging youth (and adults) to find out more about where their food comes from,” said Richard.



*The Fresh Market Bus delivers fresh vegetables throughout Fond du Lac County.*



*(L to R) Dawn and Richard Slager, founders of Produce With a Purpose.*

### Program Successes

In 2012, Richard applied for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and received cost share assistance to install a seasonal high tunnel on land he and Dawn own in Fond du Lac County, Wis. The high tunnel has enabled the Slagers to grow many crops, from arugula and Asian greens, to beets and broccoli. In January 2014, the Slagers started a fundraising campaign and raised more than \$6,000 to purchase a bus to be used to deliver fresh vegetables. Last summer, Rick's cousin pitched in with her artistic talents and painted the bus, now known throughout the county as The Fresh Market Bus.

Once the bus was ready for deliveries, Rick reached out to several YMCAs and institutions to ask to park the bus in public locations. Almost immediately, word about the bus spread. Local businesses ask the Slagers to stop at their workplace so employees can buy fresh produce. “It helps businesses boost their wellness efforts,” said Richard. The bus makes eight stops throughout the week in the Fond du Lac area and also stops in Oshkosh on Tuesdays, Milwaukee on Wednesday nights and at the Oshkosh, Appleton, Fond du Lac and West Bend farmers markets on rotating Saturdays. Stop by and visit for some fresh veggies near you!

