PRAIRIE GRASS RANCH

Hill County, MT

SIZE

7,500 acres of certified organic & transitional farmland

FARMERS

Jody & Crystal Manuel & family

FARM VISION

To demonstrate that there is a better way to farm: for our health and for our planet. To diversify through perennials and enhance the soil biome while sequestering carbon.

ABOUT THE FARM

Prairie Grass Ranch is a 7,500 acre organic farm in Hill County, Montana owned and operated by third generation farmers, Jody and Crystal Manuel and their six children. The Manuels raise heritage grains and legumes, including lentils, chickpeas, peas, alfalfa, and sanfoin sweet clover as well as organic grass-fed beef in native Montana mountain grasses. They also raise a handful of Duroc pigs, a heritage breed, each year. Their pigs are free to roam and root under a grove of fruit trees, with their feed supplemented with their organic Montana lentils and ancient grains. Pasture makes up 75% of their operation, while crops make up 25%. Their meat can be found at Regen Market.

FARMING PRACTICES

In spring 2020, the Manuels planted their first test acres of kernza®, the perennial grain developed by The Land Institute. They plan to have all of their cropland established in perennials by 2025, which will allow them to move to a no-till system. Eliminating tillage will enable the Manuels to simplify field operations, reduce costs, and improve profitability within the specialty market of perennial grains & legumes alongside grass-fed & finished beef. This year, the Manuels will be intercropping kernza® with legumes, like lentils, which will not only diversify their crop rotation, but also provide forage for their cattle.

HOW WE HELPED

Iroquois Valley provided refinancing to the Manuels to secure the 3,665 acres that they own under mission-aligned terms. As the Manuels diversify and incorporate more perennial crops, they wanted a lending partner that understood their operation and its financials – we are proud to be that partner.

IROQUOIS VALLEY FARMLAND REIT