



& Sky

“ You try one adventure after another in life, and then you eventually find something that feeds you and makes you feel like you have a purpose and value.”

of timber, 80 acres of pasture for his cattle, and about 5 acres of crops and orchard, from which he grows fruits and vegetables. Although it's not certified organic, because the state of Alabama doesn't offer such a program, he employs only organic methods learned through various sources, including the sometimes controversial Joel Salatin of Virginia's Polyface Farm. Garfrerick uses no synthetic pesticides and fertilizes exclusively with manure from his cattle mixed with hay.

“The most important thing,” he says, “is to improve your soil. I add large quantities of compost to the soil every year to continue improving the level of nutrients. The theory ... that I find most effective says that healthy plants in healthy soil attract very little pests from the insect and microbotic world.”

Similarly, the cattle he raises are grass-fed, as well as antibiotic- and hormone-free. He even uses a holistic supplement to ward off parasites. (See myFarmLife.com/earthandsky for his recipe.)

Garfrerick, who's originally from neighboring Calhoun County, started working this land in 1994. Shortly thereafter, he began selling his produce and quickly earned a reputation among area

chefs as a reliable source for beautiful product with plenty of flavor.

Among his fans is Chris Hastings, chef/owner of Hot and Hot Fish Club in nearby Birmingham. Named the 2012 Best Chef in the South by the James Beard Foundation, one of the most prestigious food organizations in the United States, Hastings began buying produce from Garfrerick shortly after they both went into business. “He brought arguably the best produce that's come across our threshold here. He's the gold standard,” says Hastings.

At one point, Garfrerick was regularly supplying some 12 restaurants with his produce, doing most of the farming and delivery himself, including planting about 1,500 tomato >>



Dede (above) helps manage the cattle and farm, especially with David (right) spending more time at the restaurant.