

By Kris Konick Special Correspondent Everyone enjoys a good farmer's market and with the grand opening of Plum Creek Farm and Market in Lanesville, Indiana, you'll find a lot of something for everyone! This is not your side of the road type stand, it is a fully working, ever growing farm offering the finest of food, fare, and entertainment around. No stone was left unturned with all the planning that has gone into this local project and the steady stream of grand opening weekend customers can certainly attest to that.

Farm owners Michael and Layni Junga have been planning this new family venture for about two years. According to their Plum Creek Farm and Market brochure "Our journey began in 2009 with only 4 goats, 2 alpacas and a horse. In 2012 we decided we wanted to make the farm a business so we moved. We moved across town from our 8 acre farm to our new 42 acre farm in Lanesville. Now we have over 75 goats, 40 chickens, a few pigs, alpacas, geese, turkeys, a donkey, and several guardian dogs, and the barn cat." It was no easy undertaking but with thorough planning and a mountain of hard work the Junga family stopped counting when they hit 150 customers in their very first grand opening weekend of Plum Creek Farm and Market.

Customers weren't the only ones handing out good reviews. The market opened with at least six onsite vendors plus an additional 8 consignment vendors (whose products appear on the shelves even when they cannot be physically present to sell them). Rebecca Klusmeier, vendor of Udderly Blessed homemade goat soap, said that her opening weekend experience was a great one, "It was a gorgeous day and a good flow of people."

Plum Creek Farm and Market grand opening weekend offered a wide array of high quality, local vendors such as: Udderly Blessed homemade goat soap. Vendor, Rebecca Klusmeier sold from her selection of lavender, oatmeal & honey, and coconut scented soap with more scents being added throughout the season. Origami Owl sales consultant Mary Zahn's wares were a treat for the eyes with beautiful jewelry. Angelia Barger's Tupperware booth was filled to overflowing with tried and true as well as some brand new Tupperware items. Love the taste but can't have all the "stuff"? Laura Ryan has you covered. The "Gluten Free Girl" offers a huge selection of baked goods, breads, muffins, scones, and doughnuts. Smell something cooking? That would be Mama D's Bakery and Catering where you can start with lunch consisting of pulled pork bbq, cole slaw or maybe a yummy potato salad and then have dessert or take it to go with some cookies and cupcakes, you can even pick up breakfast for the next morning with a loaf of Amish cinnamon bread, if you can leave it unopened until morning that is. The Junga family also has an inventory of their own homemade items for sale. Mom, Layni makes soda pop jelly in all of your favorite flavors – orange crush, cherry coke, big red, mountain dew, root beer, and dr. pepper. According to those who have taste tested, you haven't lived until you've had a pb & j sandwich made with Layni's soda pop jelly! She also sells a line of wickless candles/room fresheners. Their oldest daughter, Shawna makes beautiful crochet bags and purses and you can even pick up one of her items at the Udderly Blessed shop, a soap holder that you can use as a loofah with the homemade goat soap, or any soap of your choosing. And they will be bringing out additional products as the season progresses. Second oldest daughter, Sammi has some beautiful hand knitted scarves on display as well.

Consignement vendor products were also a hit on opening weekend. Wenning's Foods has a line of salsa and a line of pickles that are hot sellers. For a cool, original drink on a hot summer day you might go with Rick's White Label Sarsaparilla. Rick also sells bbq sauce, breads, and his own line of walking sticks. For those with an affinity for cooking, Capshew Cellars vinegars are a must and you can pick up a bottle of shrub cocktail mix to sip while you work. Local Dayspring Orchard & Honey serves up, you guessed it – honey and honey combs. And if it all sounds a little too risky, well pull up a seat at the sample table but be prepared because you just might find several of your new favorite items there.

The vendor items are just a sampling and entirely in addition to the great selection of all U.S. grown, straight from the farm fruits and vegetables that are the stars of any farmers market. Plum Creek Farm and Market has an abundance of fresh fruits and veggies, farm fresh eggs, and goat milk. As the farm continues to mature, more and more will be offered. Some will even come from Michael and Layni's almost 12 year old daughter Dakota's very own personal garden. She will have a variety of watermelons, honeydew, cantaloupe, and tiger melons coming in soon. Layni said that customers were impressed by the selection available on the first weekend and she also asked customers what they would like to see offered, she said they want to be able to offer whatever local demand calls for.

If it all sounds a bit overwhelming, grab a bite to eat and sit for a while enjoying local musical talent featured every Saturday. Local band, Silent Noise performed on opening weekend with Homeplace on June 14. There are still performance dates available this season as well. If you'd like to book a show during the farmer's market you can contact Michael Junga via facebook at www.facebook.com/plumcreekfarmandmarket or via cell phone at (502) 296-2727.

Wondering if the farm is family friendly? Considering that the Layni is due with their ninth child in July, it has to be! Kids will love seeing the newest animals on the farm at the petting zoo. Your little ones might see chickens, goats, turkeys, geese, alpacas, or Pepsi the rabbit during their visit.

The Jungas had planned to fire up the grill as they will be serving up hot dogs, burgers, chips, and drinks all season long, but a family emergency called them away late Thursday night and into early Friday morning of opening weekend. So what do you do when the unexpected happens as you are supposed to be opening? When you live on an actual day-to-day working farm, you return home to find that your children (with some help from their grandparents) have stepped up and done everything while you were away. If that doesn't tell you of the strength of this family and their love for each other and their community, well that's just one more reason to drive out and meet them in person.

Word is apparently spreading very quickly of Plum Creek Farm and Market's success as they have added FOUR new vendors just since opening weekend! New vendors to be featured are: Katie's Cakes, The Kombucha Lady, Jenna's Whimsies, and Ellen Shelton. They keep a sharp eye out for local, unique, quality vendors and if you are one, contact Michael to get in early in the season. Throughout the season, come and see some exciting demonstrations at the market such as the making of Udderly Blessed's homemade goat soap, basket weaving, or who knows what else.

The farm and the family continues to grow and mature. This spring the Jungas planted fruit and nut trees: apple, peach, pear, cherry, plum, walnut, pecan, and beechnut. They also planted strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, grapes, honey berries, and kiwis. The yearly garden staples they plant look like: tomatoes, corn, peppers, potatoes, radishes, onions, sunflowers, peas, beans, melons, gourds, pumpkins, carrots, lettuce, and more. And they plant “beneficial flowers.” The beneficial flowers are either planted to draw beneficial bugs to the plants or to keep harmful bugs away. This year they will also add a greenhouse for year round growing and they will be adding an herb garden.

So when can you get all of these great items? Plum Creek Farm and Market located at 7892 Tandy Road in Lanesville, Indiana held their grand opening weekend June 6-7 and they will be open every weekend through October. Plum Creek Farm and Market hours are Fridays 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. What a great place to do all of your produce and special interest shopping, a great place to stop by each weekend just to check out the newest treat, the latest thing, local sights, sounds, tastes, and smells. As mentioned earlier you can keep up with the latest events at www.facebook.com/plumcreekfarmandmarket or their website is www.plumcreekfarmandmarket.com. These are excellent resources but nothing can take the place of a good old fashioned day spent on the farm!