



**Candidate: Shannon Mutschelknaus**

**Business: Wayward Springs LLC**

**Social Media/Websites: [Website](#) [Facebook](#)**

Shannon Mutschelknaus, owner of Wayward Springs Farm in Aurora, SD provides visionary leadership through his pioneering use of year-round production and season-extension technologies. All the while, Shannon's dedication to sharing his knowledge actively promotes innovation in the state's local food systems.

Shannon provides truly visionary leadership to South Dakota's agricultural industry. In a climate defined by harsh winters, his work at Wayward Springs is a powerful demonstration that local food production is not limited to summer months. The farm's core mission is year-round produce production, achieved through the innovative use of technologies like the Year-Round High Tunnel and, a Year-Round, Deep Winter Greenhouse. These efforts tackle one of the greatest challenges facing specialty crop growth in South Dakota, successfully bridging the gap in local food availability during the cold season. By implementing these advanced systems, Shannon is actively advocating for the viability and necessity of specialty crops year-round, expanding the market and demonstrating profitability for future growers.

Through his commitment to innovation and prosperity, Shannon stands out as a leading figure in the local food movement. His on-farm research, business approach and outreach model is a prime example of promoting growth through sustainable, low-input methods; ensuring fresh, local produce is available to the community when it is traditionally inaccessible.

Shannon is also a dedicated mentor and investor in the next generation of producers. By hosting "Year-Round Greenhouse Discussion Groups" and maintaining an active online presence, he shares his challenges and successes of season extension with new and beginning farmers. This transparency and his willingness to educate directly promote the growth of specialty crop adoption across the state, equipping others with the tools to innovate and succeed.