



Candidate: Denise and Mark Venner

Business: Venner Farm

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

Denise and Mark Venner, owners of Venner Farm in Pierre, are fantastic advocates of the specialty crop industry and are passionate about educating others. Venner Farm is a small farm dedicated to growing food and practicing organic farming methods to improve and sustain the soil for the future. For the Venners, there is no greater reward than being able to share what they grow with others and promoting local, sustainable food production.

Connecting their local community to healthy food is important to the Venners, as seen in the efforts they put into the Farm to School Program and strong relationships with local restaurants. To them, Farm to School is about more than just selling the specialty crop ingredients, but also going to the schools and helping teach students about their food. Denise was also involved in the creation of the Capital City Farmer's Market.

They have been fantastic SDSPA members, both utilizing the resources shared through the association, and then sharing back by teaching to others. Last year, they took on hosting a field day to help share the knowledge they've worked hard to gain and implement over the many years they've worked as producers. While working hard themselves, they also want to see their peers in specialty crop and organic production succeed as well. They've also previously hosted a plow to plate event to connect their community to how high tunnel production can help their community increase their own local food security.