



Alumni

Brandon Dodge, Class of 2015

Farm Name: RASTAFARMI

Location: Reisterstown, MD

Acreage in production: ~6 acres, established in 2015

Products: Vegetables and fruit

Certifications: Certified Organic, MDA GAP

Website: rastafarmi.com

Facebook: facebook.com/rastafarmiMD

Instagram: [@rastafarmi](https://www.instagram.com/rastafarmi)

What initially led you to farming? In 2012, I joined a CSA offered by Calvert's Gift Farm. This was my introduction into farming.

How did you find your land? We found the property through our mentors in the BFTP, Jack and Beckie Gurley.

You were a 2015 graduate of the BFTP. What learning opportunities have helped you become a better farmer? Meeting other farmers in the Future Harvest community and sharing ideas through farm tours and conversation has taught me more about farming than most of the literature I've read.

What is the hardest part about farming? Sometimes when you want to talk, you're in the fields all alone.

What is the most rewarding? Being a part of the local economy is the most rewarding. The Chesapeake Foodshed is an exciting place to do business.

What do you feel works best for your farm? Restaurant sales are where almost all of our produce goes. It allows us to Pick, hydro-cool, pack and ship to the customer in one day. Often times they receive produce within hours of harvest. It will rarely see a cooler. It just tastes better. This is one of our greatest assets.

How do you sell your produce? About 90% of our produce is sold through Chesapeake Farm to Table. The other 10% (transplants, produce boxes) is sold informally. Learn more about Chesapeake Farm to Table here.

What is your favorite tool and why? My Buck Nobleman pocket knife is used daily. From cutting drip tape and plastic mulch to slicing open a new bag of seed it's always handy.

What is your favorite crop to grow?

Edible flowers are one of those things that allow you to experiment and explore. Different varieties of vegetables will produce different sizes and color flowers. You also see bees and other insects gathering pollen that you never knew existed. Flower farmers must see this quite often.

What advice would you give to aspiring farmers?

Well, I'm still taking advice at this point. We do live in a society where anyone can do anything. Industries are being developed across the nation but farming is an ancient profession. I don't see it leaving any time soon.