

Ontario 150 Project “Living Off the Land”
 Edited Clips of Oral History Transcript of Jim and Jane McGregor

	Clip 1	
DB	Can you tell us about the first settlers on the farm?	
Jim M	The first settlers on the farm were Robert McGregor, our great grandfather, and his brother John McGregor. They came up from Beckwith Township in 1856. Robert was twenty three years old and John was nineteen years old. They came from Beckwith Township, and their father was John McGregor and he came from Comrie, Scotland in 1818. John was actually the one who bought the farm to start with his sons Robert and John to settle in this area.	
DB	What acreage did they have and how many acres were tillable at the time?	
Jim M	Well, they got two hundred acres, one full lot, and there was no land tillable at the time. They say that there might have been a small First Nations' clearing on the property when they first came up, but there was basically no land cleared.	
DB	What buildings did they manage to put up?	
Jim M	The first building they put up in 1856 was a log house that they cut from the bush right around the place they built it. And in 1857 they built a log barn and a log shed. They kept building more barns as time went on. In the 1880's they built a large bank barn, and in 1912 my grandfather built a large horse stable. He tore down the old horse stable that would have been log and built a big new horse stable that held twelve horses.	
Jane M	And in those early days in 1856 when the two brothers came to Glenroy Farm, their sister Mary also came up from Carleton Place, and she helped them when they were first building the log house, I guess, and just helped them with getting food prepared, I expect, and helping them sort out where to put different things in the log house.	
Jim M	Logging was part of their income during my great grandfather's time, as well as my grandfather's and father's time. They actually made most of their money from the bush but made some from farming during those three generations. An interesting story was in the early 1880's McGregors took many logs out of the bush and transported them down to the ice in the Ottawa River. The money was going to be used to buy a new brick house which was the style of the time. As was the trend of the day they would take the logs down there. Unfortunately the jobber who came to buy them but he was taking them to Montreal and then would return with the money. He never returned with the money. So they could not afford the brick for the new house. They had to quarry the stone themselves down at the bottom of Laventures' Hill which is just down the road a kilometre, and they brought it all up and made a stone house which wasn't to their liking because that's what they had over in Scotland.	
DB	What were some of the early crops that they produced?	
Jim M	Well, there would not have been any crops grown the first year or two. They probably had the horses and they might have had to buy hay from the neighbours for the first little while. They would have grown a little bit of grassy hay, and they would probably have grown oats for grain and that would have been it. There would have been sheep, chickens, pigs, horses, and a few head of cattle eventually, but they wouldn't have brought those up the first time they came up.	
DB	Was maple syrup part of the business at any point?	
Jim M	Well, maple syrup was never a big part of the business but they always made maple syrup from the beginning because they had a great maple sugar bush. They used to have a big cast iron pot that they boiled the syrup in. They would always keep a pork roast, I guess it would be, salt pork just above at the top of the boil, hanging down from a string so that when the sap started	

McGregor Interview Clips

	boiling up it would hit the salt pork and back down so that it didn't boil over. Just as you would do today, putting a bit of butter in the potato pot. They certainly used maple syrup for a lot of their sugar and they made maple sugar as well and used it for a sweetener.	
DB	Can you tell me how the farm was handed down over the next few generations.	
Jim M	My great grandfather Robert died in 1920 and he held onto the farm until he was basically on his death bed and he turned it over to my grandfather who had been working on the farm for quite a few years. So in 1920 my grandfather took over the farm, and in 1956 my father, Steve, bought the farm from his father and he kept farming there until about 2002. My wife Ann and I and our son Ian and his wife Deb bought the farm from mother and dad.	
	CLIP 2	
DB	What are your first memories of the farm as a child in the 1950's?	
Jim M	Yes, a few memories. The first memory that I have is if my grandfather churning butter down in the basement. I was quite young, I don't know how old I was, it seems to me I might have been three or so. Another memory I have, and Janey will have memories as well, is the making of maple syrup and having the team of horses and sleigh picking up the sap, and boiling over an open pan which we did for many, many years after, even as an adult we used to do that.	
DB	I have heard that the sugar content in this area was higher than in other areas. Is there any truth to that?	
Jim M	I am not sure about that. Certainly the maple syrup taste changes a little bit on the soil it is based on. And the sugar content in my estimation varies whether it is an old tree or a young tree. A younger tree will have more sugar content than the older trees. And yes, maybe depending where it is there may be more sugar in it.	
Jim M	Another memory that both Janey and I have is our grandmother making homemade soap. She used to take the ashes from the furnace and put them into a great big pot, a cast iron pot, and they would store them in that and then they would put some into a smaller cast iron pot with a hole in the bottom and they would pour the water through, collect the lye that came out the bottom, put that into a wooden box that was lined with tin and mix it with animal fat and make soap.	
Jane M	I remember Grandma working in what we called the cookhouse. It was the place where we did all the cooking in the summer time for the men when they were coming to harvest or plant crops or whatever. Grandma would have this, I can't even remember the container that the soap was in, but Jimmy seems to remember that. I have this vivid memory of her cutting the soap and it was just like she was cutting butter. It was kind of a beautiful thing, sitting there. You didn't often see my grandmother in a non-feminine stance, but she would have her legs kind of wrapped around the soap container and she would be cutting it. She was so strong even though she was not a large woman at all. But she was putting everything into it while cutting that soap. It's a great memory. And then one of my earliest memories is going out to the barn. We had a little room off the big cow byre and there was a cream separator in that room and Mom would take Jim and I out there as babies practically and she would do the cream separating, I guess. I am not really sure what she was doing. I guess she'd be cleaning it. So that's one of my very early memories. I would have been two or three then. It stopped after that when the third baby came.	

McGregor Interview Clips

	CLIP 3	
DB	Back to outdoor jobs. When did you actually start working on the farm outdoors?	
Jim M	Well, it would have been at a fairly young age. One of my first memories actually is driving the single horse on the hayfork so that the hayfork would move the hay up into the mow. I remembered being frightened. I have a picture here of my cousin and I don't think I was much more than six at the time. It was a quiet old horse but it was a lot bigger than I was. The men were not too far away over in the barn, but my job was to lead this horse out and bring it back. As a six year old. I am guessing six or seven. I wasn't very old. We got jobs fairly early then. Shortly after that time I would have been gathering eggs, feeding the calves, that type of thing. Mainly after school in the afternoon or evening. I usually didn't have to do too many chores in the morning before school. The other job I had was bringing in wood into the wood box at home as well.	
Jane M	That was my job too. How old? I don't remember not doing it. We would have been young to even bring one stick of wood in because we needed a bit of kindling and a bit of wood. And our woodshed was what is a garage now. That kind of tells you how big the woodshed was. So it was quite big and there was a lot of wood there. Anyway we had a box in the kitchen right beside the wood stove and it was our job after school to fill it up every day.	
Jim M	In our house there were three stoves in total... four. We haven't said this but our grandparents lived in the same house as we did in a different part at the front of the house and so they had a wood stove and there was a big stove in the living room which was a furnace, there was another cookstove in our kitchen and there was another cookstove out in the cookhouse. So there was lots of wood to carry usually our grandfather carried the big wood for us. All three generations were working on the farm. We were trained early.	
DB	The wood was all taken from your own woodlot?	
Jim M	Yes, that would be a job in the fall, putting the wood in from piles outside and putting it in the woodshed. That would take several days to do. It would have been cut the winter before.	
DB-	And at what stage were hand saws replaced with chainsaws or mechanical saws?	
Jim M-	That would have been just before my time. My father was the first to have a chainsaw, I am thinking around 1950 probably or shortly after the war he would have had his first chainsaw. Before that there were crosscut saws and axe.	
DB	What livestock was on the farm when the two of you were children and how did that change over the years?	
Jim M	We had... even when we were children it changed. For the first few years of our lives in the farm, Dad and Grandpa were both separating cream and selling the cream and taking the whey to feed the pigs and calves which were either in a calf pen or in the summertime were in a calf pasture. In 1956 when Dad bought the farm he did not want to milk cows any more so he switched to raising veal calves. And he would have often two or three or maybe four calves sucking the cows and fattening those calves up and selling them. There was a bit of money to be made at that. And then a few years after that, he started raising steers, fattening steers. He built a feedlot outside the barns and grew more corn silage. When we were young there would have been chickens all the time. Pigs, I can remember there would be one or two litters of little pigs, plus there might have been four or five sows in the pig pen. There were horses. When I was young there were at least two teams of horses all the time. The cattle... we had two cow byre, a small cow byre and a big cow byre. Nobody will know today what a byre is. B Y R E. there would have been fifteen cows anyway I suppose in total, maybe up towards twenty cows at the most.	

McGregor Interview Clips

Jane M	Dad raised the roof where one of the places where the pigs were kept and increased the chickens to about two hundred.
Jim M	Dad started raising in the late forties probably and all during the fifties he was raising chickens, little day old chicks, and he had as many as a thousand running outside, and it was certainly free range once they got big enough to be outside. That's another memory we have, chickens running all over the yard. He would keep two or three hundred of those and put them into the chicken house for laying birds and they would sell those eggs as another little source of income, and he would sell the other chickens to somebody who would sell them to other farmers or whatever they did with them then. They were layers, what I remember were the White Leghorn layers.
	CLIP 4
DB	You mentioned the horses, when did tractors move in and start to take over?
Jim M	In 1948 Dad and Uncle Robert, his brother, built the first tractor out of two old trucks. They put the two transmissions together so they could slow it down slow enough. It ploughed about twenty acres that fall and it broke. That was the end of that. We have a picture of it. In 1948 Dad and Uncle Robert ordered a Farmall H from the local international dealership, Andy MacAthur, and it was just after wartime and they couldn't build tractors fast enough so it wasn't until February 1949 that the tractor actually came in. Dad was so proud of that tractor that he had to drive from Renfrew all the way down to the farm and he wouldn't put it in road gear all the way down. That didn't last very long. He worked that tractor very, very hard, but the first day or two it was well looked after. So that was the tractor. With that tractor they have bought a set of ploughs, two furor ploughs and a set of discs. Everything else, this is 1949, would have been still done with horses, all the haying, all the threshing, was done with horses. Now our neighbours had a threshing machine [name] and my grandfather bought the threshing machine in 1919 and they had it until 1959, that same threshing machine forty years. We didn't have a tractor to run the threshing machine but the McLarens had an old steel wheeled tractor that they used on the threshing machine. Then in about the mid-fifties, maybe early fifties, Dad cut down the tongues of the rake and the horse drawn mower so they could be run with the tractor and did that for a couple of years, and then in the late fifties he started buying a full line, which was about the time he took over the farm as well. He got a full line of haying machinery so he got a new set of mowers and a crimper and a rake and a baler in 1959, and also in 1959 they got a new combine and sold the old fashioned machines. So it was during the fifties there was a transition took place and by 1959... horses were still used in our farm for threshing up until 1959 and for some of the work... there's another memory I have as a kid is walking work down behind my father and grandfather when they had the binder making sheaves so that they could thresh them. Another memory I have is riding the horses on the wagon, I'd only be six or seven. Of course my father was right there, but I would supposedly be steering the horse.
DB	Jane, what can you tell us about those times.
Jane M	During that time I was not really involved outside. I was born in 1952 and I was the first of six girls in the family and so my memories are more indoor memories of what was going on in the kitchen and home at that time. And one of my first memories is of the men coming for the threshing crew or other jobs being done by the men out in the field. We would get up in the morning, it would be summer time of course, the fire would be started in the cookhouse, not in the kitchen. So we had a Findlay Oval stove in both the cookhouse and the kitchen. So the fire would be started in the cookhouse and we would start cooking and baking. We would cook a huge pot of potatoes. The idea was to make enough food at lunch to feed all the men and have enough leftovers for supper.

McGregor Interview Clips

DB	About how many men on be on the crew?	
Jane M	I don't know.	
Jim M	It depends. If it was the threshing gang, there would be five or six. If they were sawing wood it was a bigger gang then, a dozen men or so at that time. Sawing wood only took one or two days usually but the threshing might have taken a couple of weeks.	
Jane M	My recollection is that the women did not sit to eat when the men came into the house. The men ate their food and it was serious business. They had their heads down and they ate lots of meat and potatoes and carrots, and corn, turnips, whatever vegetables were available then. We did not have a wide range of that sort of thing then. And there would always be at least two desserts. We would have baked pies and biscuits. Often a second dessert after something like pie would be biscuits and maple syrup. We always had maple syrup so that would be one of the staples of dessert. And then the men would go away and sometimes they'd lie down outside if they had time and then the women would clean up and get ready for the next meal, supertime or whatever. One of the big things in 1962 when my mother's sixth child was born in February she got a washer and a dryer. She had had it with doing diapers out on the line in the middle of winter. That was Dad's job to get the washer and dryer in place for her. That was a big deal.	
DB	What were your feelings about the farm and farming when you were growing up?	
Jane M	My feelings were that there was a lot of work and not too many choices about what to do. I always had this feeling, especially as a teenager, that I wanted to get out in the world and see what was going on out there. We just went to Renfrew and Arnprior when we were kids. That's as far as we went. We went to Ottawa maybe a few times a year if we were lucky. Not when we were really young. I had a feeling that there was something else going on in the world and I thought a some point when I was able to spring loose, I was going to do that. But as soon as I did that, as soon as I went off to college, my love of the farm surfaced and I realized what an amazing childhood I had had. I was ready to come back soon, but it took another twenty years before I came back.	
DB	Jim, what were your feelings about the farm and farming?	
Jim M	Well, I always enjoyed the farm and I enjoyed the work. There was always lots of work to do, of course, but I always enjoyed the work. Our father instilled the value of taking on work as a challenge or anything that came up as a challenge and didn't look on it in a negative way but in a positive way. Certainly when you get to be an older teenager, I worked on the farm until I was eighteen, even the summer I was eighteen I worked on the farm, making five dollars a day and all I could eat. Sometimes when you're that age, sixteen, seventeen, you might begrudge your father telling you what to do every day and so I was ready to get off the farm and leave the farm at that time because I wanted to get more education. I enjoyed going to school as well, but I always knew I enjoyed the farm and I figured that some day I would be coming back to the farm.	
	CLIP 5	
DB	Did you make any decisions or have any influence on what direction the farm was going or did your dad hold the reins?	
Jim M	After I came back in '77 Dad was glad to see that I was taking an interest in the farm, and even though I had only three acres of sweet corn and I helped him with the haying. The next year we had a little bit more corn. By '79 it was the first year we formed the business McGregors Produce. My sister Ann worked for me. She was just eighteen years old at that time so it was a summer job	

McGregor Interview Clips

	<p>for her, and my wife Ann and I, along with our parents, all helped to kind of start the produce business. That's when we started stand in Arnprior that year. That was the beginning of the produce business. Yes, I was always interested in being involved with the farm, and Dad was good at letting me make some decisions. Eventually I even had some of the beef cattle. Dad had most of the beef cattle on the farm, but he was very good at least at considering my viewpoint.</p>	
Jane M	<p>I think from Jim's sisters' point of view, their being six of us, none of us were really interested in taking over the farm in the same way as Jim was because we had moved on into other parts of our working lives and that sort of thing. Quite a few of us went on to get postsecondary education and we had chosen other career paths, and for me personally I wanted to move back to Lochwinnoch and eventually did that but even before that happened in '91 I was so pleased, and so were my sisters, that our brother was interested in taking over the farm because we knew if he wasn't interested we were concerned for what it meant for Mom and Dad. Would they have to sell the farm eventually or would it walk out of the family. That kind of made us all sad so we were all so happy that Jimmy was interested in it. So we supported him from afar, behind the scenes.</p>	
DB-	<p>Jim, you and your wife Ann eventually bought a farm of your own. Did this become part of the business?</p>	
Jim M-	<p>Well, the farm we bought which is here, Dad actually bought first and we bought it from him. We used this farm for the beef cattle. It was a pasture farm for the beef cattle. The reason we did that was because the home farm where Mom and Dad lived, where our son Ian and his wife Deb live now, it has loamier soil and some sandy soil and it was better for some kinds of gardening. So we decided to use it. That was one of the ways Dad and I worked together. Even though I owned this farm, he owned most of the cattle on it. I had some of his land on his farm which we put the produce on. We were working jointly in that way. I owned about twenty to twenty five percent of the beef cattle at that time and he owned the rest. We had about a hundred cows for quite a few years between the two of us. And then I ran the produce business.</p>	
	CLIP 6	
DB	<p>You mentioned the different types of soil, could you enlarge upon that a little bit, which soils grow which produce the best.</p>	
Jim M	<p>Yes, we have several types of soil. There are two main types that run all the way from a sandy soil to a loam soil to a clay soil on the home farm. The farm that Ann and I bought is similar although there isn't as much loam soil on it. It is mostly clay. The loam soil is generally better for root crops, especially potatoes and carrots and onions and things like that because in loam or sandy soil you can dig into it. Clay soil can get both very muddy and also quite hard during the summer and the fall if it is wet. Some crops do grow better on the clay soil. We started growing strawberries in the sandier soil and now we are starting to move them into the clay soil because the sandy soil tends to have nematodes that are a problem for strawberries and so we are moving them off the sandy soil.</p>	
DB	<p>How did you determine what produce you were going to grow? I supposed you started with maybe potatoes, carrots, turnips, that sort of thing.</p>	
Jim M	<p>We started with sweet corn and then we had a lot of different crops. Mother gave me a book in about 1977 that was called Growing for Market. I can't tell you who the authors was, but inside that book there was a statement made that has stuck with me. He said grow what you can sell; don't sell what you can grow. There is a lot of wisdom in those words. What he was saying was if there's a market for something, then grow that. There was a market for sweet corn and there was also a market for strawberries so we started focusing over the years in those and some other</p>	

McGregor Interview Clips

	<p>crops. Now we do grow other things as well, raspberries, beans and tomatoes because there is a market for those things. We tended to get out of things like peppers and some of the other things because there is not as big a demand for some of those items. Sometimes there's just not much money in it and hard to make a living from it.</p>	
	CLIP 7	
DB	<p>At some point you must have had to start hiring farm labourers to help with the crops and so on. How has that expanded over the years?</p>	
Jim M	<p>In 2006 we started hiring offshore labour. We started with three men. The reason we did that was that the year before we were getting all local help and we would have twenty people or more picking strawberries for us. One year five people from one family, father, his wife and three teenage children were picking berries for us and all of a sudden they left. Apparently they headed for the west. They had been picking tobacco for part of the summer and picked strawberries for us for part of the summer. They had done that for two or three years. They left and we were left without help. We still had some help. The two boys were home working with me as well. We nearly killed ourselves that summer trying to get all the work done, and we didn't get it all done. My two sons had been suggesting that we needed offshore help before that and I hadn't been but that convinced me convinced me because we just couldn't get the local help. So that first year we had three people offshore, Jamaicans, and we just continued to grow that and last year and this year we are going to have twenty four Jamaicans working for us.</p>	
Jim M	<p>That has allowed us to hire thirty students, mostly university and college students, to work in retail sales for us. If we didn't have those offshore workers working for us we would not be able to get enough people interested to work in the labour positions to keep thirty young people working for us in the retail position. I say thirty students, they may not all be students. Some are teachers that have the summer off. Thirty Canadians plus six, there are my two sons, our two daughter-in-laws, and Ann and I both work on the farm as well. And I have one sister that works full time in the summer on the farm and Janey helps in the summertime when she can, going to the market and things.</p>	
DB	<p>Can you explain the economics of bringing the labourers in. Who pays for what, transportation, housing.</p>	
Jim M	<p>First of all you have to prove you cannot get Canadian help which we are able to do. Of course. Then you have to pay for their flights over here and their flight back. You can get up to half that money back for the flight if they are working here long enough. It takes about six months to pay for half. The flights are about six hundred dollars each way. We also have to pay for all their housing and we have to pay for their transportation for going into town once a week. There is no recourse in getting that money back. It's just part of the deal. Then we pay them minimum wage while they are working on the farm.</p>	
Jane M	<p>And you have the Jamaican Embassy that you work with as well. Is that correct?</p>	
Jim M	<p>We work with a Jamaican liaison which is the Jamaican government. They have an office in Toronto. There is also an organization called Farms which helps us with the visas and work permits and expedites getting Jamaicans from Jamaica up to Canada each season. They have a special program for that.</p>	
DB	<p>Now is there housing on your farm or do they stay in local places?</p>	
Jim M	<p>It's on our farm. We started housing them in one of the motels in Renfrew for the first three</p>	

McGregor Interview Clips

	<p>years or so, but it's on one of our farms which is just down the road about a kilometre or mile. We took one of the old farm houses and we added to it and made like a bunkhouse within the farm house. All twenty four of them are able to sleep there. We put in more showers. More bathrooms, more fridges, more stoves so they have enough to meet their requirements. So we have Jamaican workers, the longest one are here for about seven months they come in about the middle of April and some of them stay until the middle of November. Some will come as late as the middle of June and they are here specifically for picking strawberries and raspberries and beans. Some are transferred to other farms around the first of August and others during the fall get transferred to other farms.</p>	
DB	Has this system worked well for you?	
Jim M	<p>It has really worked well for us because, and I think it has worked well for the Jamaicans as well, because it gives them an opportunity to earn money. Many of them don't have jobs or high paying jobs in Jamaica. It has certainly worked well for us because it has allowed us to expand the business. We didn't even have any stands before the Jamaicans. We had several markets and we had a stand on the farm so that's allowed us to expand our business greatly and it has also allowed us to hire more Canadians as well. If it wasn't for the Jamaicans we wouldn't be able to hire as many Canadians.</p>	
	CLIP 8	
DB	The word strawberries comes up quite frequently. I would like to backtrack a little and have Jane tell us about the great strawberry fests that the family used to host.	
Jane M	<p>Yes, that was in the eighties I guess when we did that, shortly after McGregors Produce got started. If I remember correctly we got started as a kind of promotional thing. Two of our sisters had a catering business. So the way it went, <i>we would all get together as a family, and for a day or two before the strawberry festival which we held on a Saturday, and Mom did a lot of the prep work so we could just come in make the strawberry desserts.</i> Mom would get two or three people to help her clean the berries.</p>	
Jim M	My wife Ann was involved. There were two kitchens going	
Jane M	<p>Then we would make numerous strawberry desserts and we would charge a flat rate of I think it was five dollars for all you could eat. They were very popular. We did those for quite a few years because people just loved having all these strawberry desserts. It was really a family affair. Everybody helped and everybody just pitched in.</p>	
Jim M	Do you remember all the desserts?	
Jane M	<p>Strawberry pie for sure. Fresh strawberry pie so that meant putting the fresh strawberries in the bake pie crust and then making a glaze to go over the top of that. We served it with a choice of whipped cream or ice cream. We had a three layer trifle kind of thing, jam and biscuits or scones. Strawberry kebabs with other fruit on them. There were quite a few things. People seemed to be very happy with the price and what they got to eat. It was a family affair on all counts because customers came with their families as well. We had music. My dad and his friends would play old time jigs and reels and waltzes with their fiddles and guitars and things. So it really was a wonderful thing but eventually we kind of wrapped it up because there were too many babies coming in the family and so the young moms, our sisters, and Jim's wife Ann were... there are seventeen nieces and nephews in the whole family and at one point. Ten of those seventeen were under the age of four. So it was about that time we decided that it was a little bit too difficult to do. I think the last year we had it was '88 or '89.</p>	

McGregor Interview Clips

DB	Considering it was an all you could eat affair, it wasn't economically sound?	
Jane M	Nobody got paid for anything, any of the work that was being done right from the picking of it from Jim's point of view and Dad to Mom doing all the work. Mom probably paid some people to help her clean the berries. The same for Ann. Then we all just gave freely of our time and help.	
Jim M	It was just a promotion at that time. We were learning a lot.	
Jane M	We are a close-knit family. It was no big deal until there were too many babies to make it sensible from a time point of view. Everybody was getting busy.	
	CLIP 9	
DB-	Now we see McGregors' strawberries in the fall. Could you explain the changes that have taken place there?	
Jim M	The traditional strawberries are called matted row and they're produced the end of June and early July. They are grown just on the bare dirt. Straw is placed in between the rows for that. The strawberries that are grown in the fall are called day neutral strawberries and they're grown in raised beds with plastic put over the top and a drip tape put under the plastic. The strawberries are a different variety completely that you grow in the raised beds. With the matted row strawberries, you plant them one year and you don't get berries until the next. With the raised beds you get them the same year you plant them. So it is a whole different type of strawberry plant and it's a whole different growing process as well. The strawberries that we have in the fall are very nice. They don't start producing until about the first of August. And they just keep getting more plentiful, and usually in September they are very plentiful and very tasty. The cooler nights seem to put a little more sugar into them. They seem to be as sweet as the strawberries we have in June. There's a demand. The reason we have gone to that is because the consumer can buy strawberries in the store three hundred and sixty five days a year because of Florida and California, and other countries like Mexico. We are afraid of losing that market and it's a market that's been profitable for us. We don't want to lost that. The same goes for other strawberry producers. So we try to extend our growing season through most of the summer . Our objective is to get strawberries from as early as we can in June. We have even had them the odd time the end of May. And have them produce until the frost. Which for us is usually after thanksgiving, sometimes the middle of October. There are little lulls in the middle of the summer when one is finished and the other is not quite ready to go, it our objective is to fill that in. We are doing more each year to try to do that. I think eventually we will get there. We will probably have strawberries for up to five months.	
DB	There is such a demand for local produce, what other crops have you extended the season?	
Jim M	The strawberries, I'll talk about that for a minute. We've extended the season by putting row covers out. They actually allow us to bring the strawberries out a little bit sooner and also you can out it back on them in the fall so that if you get a light frost you can extend it into the fall as well. We do the same thing with yellow and green beans. We do the same thing with tomatoes and we do the same thing with sweet corn. All of those are a lot of work, but the other thing that we do with beans and sweet corn is that we plant them through biodegradable clear plastic in the spring which helps to warm the soil up sooner. It helps to hold the moisture in as well. Then we put a row cover over the top of that just shortly after the seeds are planted and all of that helps to warm it up faster and the plants actually do better as it acts as a little greenhouse. So we will have corn about two weeks earlier than if we didn't use row covers and didn't use plastic. And we'll have strawberries probably two weeks earlier as well. Certainly ten days to two weeks. The same	

McGregor Interview Clips

	with the beans and the tomatoes. We haven't done anything with the raspberries. We just grow different varieties to help extend the season there.	
	CLIP 10	
DB	You mentioned your sons earlier. They are now part of the business. Can you explain that for us?	
Jim M	In 2002 Ian and Deb came back to the farm, and they wanted to farm. So we had to expand the farm. At the same time, I was just retiring from teaching and we had to expand the farm. I was wanting to make a little more income from the farm and Ian was wanting to make a full income from the farm and so we had to expand the farm quite a bit to do that. Five years later Cameron our youngest son who is five years younger than Ian, he had been working out off the farm and he came back and wanted to farm with us as well. So we had to expand even further at that time. Up until that point when Ian came here we had been doing a couple of local markets and doing pick your own and selling produce right from the farm. We had wholesaled up to that point as well, sweet corn and strawberries to some of the grocery stores in the valley. We decided we had to make a shift around that time. We started going to more farmers' markets, Carp farmers, market and Ottawa farmers' market. A year or two later, after that, we started opening up our stands. We opened up one in Renfrew and Arnprior the first year. I am not sure but I am going to say maybe '05. And we have been opening up more stands, we had fourteen stands last year growing and pick your own business, plus four farmers' markets. Seven days a week in the summertime.	
DB	You have also acquired more land, I believe. Can you explain that?	
Jim M	I have not acquired it. My sons have acquired it. I should just go back for a second. The three of us work together and we are joint ventures in this business which is a little bit like a partnership but we each kind of run our own farm because I am not involved with the cash cropping which includes wheat and soybeans and grade corn. I am not involved in that, just the produce end of things. The other two are interested in the cash dropping end of things so they do a bit more, although I often help them with it. They each have their own machinery and bring their own assets to that. They each own their own farmland so they own most of the farmland now. I'm going into semi- retirement or towards retirement mode as time goes on. And that is part of our succession plan in this joint venture. Now back to... what was the question? Expansion.	
DB	I understand you have planted orchards.	
Jim M	Cameron has bought a farm. Ian's on the home farm. Cameron has bought the farm that we're in right now, not the house, but all the farmland. Ian has bought three other farms now down the road, and Cameron has bought another farm up is Goshen and on that farm, it is all part of McGregors Produce, he, well we all have been involved but he has planted about fifteen hundred apple trees this past year in 2016 and we plan on planting another fifteen hundred trees this coming year so that will be about five acres of apple trees. This is kind of an extension of our business. He's hoping to do pick your own apples, but no doubt there will be some apples going through our farm market stands as well in the fall. It takes a few years for the apples to grow. We're just going slow with that because we don't want to put too risk out at any time. All of the strawberries, sweet corn and the other big five we call them, strawberries, sweet corn, bean tomatoes and raspberries, they are all down on Ian's farm which was the home farm. So this gives Cameron something to work on and focus on as well. A joint venture, one of the things when you set up a joint venture there is an end date and we don't know when that end date is. Eventually the two sons will want to split up and do their own thing I would think, and it may be at the end of their career that they split up. So we're trying to set up a farm business that is easier to split up down the road than what it might be if it's all together jointly in one farm name, for instance, or one corporation. So we are not incorporated.	

McGregor Interview Clips

	CLIP 11	
DB	So do you see a future for the farms?	
Jim M	Oh, for sure. At this point, looking at this vantage point, if you had asked me that in 1980 I am not sure I'd be as positive, but a lot has changed since 1980 to 2017. In 1980 the interest rate was twenty per cent and it was difficult making money on the farm, but now that we have bought into the buy local movement and producing for that, it has helped us a lot, and because of the two boys who are interested in farming, and Ian especially with his education from Guelph University, he is quite interested in the production end of things. Cameron, his education is from Carleton University in policing, but he's very personable and has a lot of qualities in that camp. Both are personable but Cameron is just a little more outgoing than Ian is. So they both have their strong points. I can see a lot of synergy if they are able to stay together in the farming operation.	