

## Riverside Cranberries – Brian DeWit and Family

With farming as a part of his family's history, Brian DeWit is a proud BC cranberry farmer in the Glen Valley area where he is raising his family to appreciate the noble profession.

One of seven children, Brian was born and raised on the family farm in Glen Valley, near Fort Langley, BC. The family farm included dairy, hogs and eventually cranberries. Growing up, Brian was accustomed to hard work on the farm and even helped neighbours by becoming a milker for them after school.

When high school was done, Brian wanted to explore the world. Seeing new places, experiencing new things – Brian loved to travel. But he always came home to help out, and helped his dad plant the farm's first cranberries in 1998.



Brian will tell you that his transition into having his own cranberry farm was a natural progression. After all his travels, the idea of farming spoke to him. He settled in the Glen Valley area down the road from his dad's farm and around the corner from his brother's farm. The timing was fortunate – Ocean Spray was looking to have more acres planted in 2009, and Riverside Cranberries was born. Today, it is a 44 acre farm with 35 acres planted to cranberries.

As with other farmers, Brian expresses that farming is more than a job - it's a lifestyle. In his own words, he describes his life as a cranberry grower as a blessing. "I know how fortunate I am to be doing what I do, and to have my family around to share it with." Brian states. Cranberry farming gives him the opportunity to provide for his family, while having the flexibility to spend time with them in a way he couldn't at a different kind of job.

And it seems it is not just Brian that has the “cranberry bug” in his family. His wife Mandy and five children (Caleb, Beckem, Gavin, Kenzie and Lexie) love being cranberry farmers, being a part of everything and working with Dad. Harvest is especially fun when they can take a boat out onto the flooded bog. Their family’s pride is evident when you see the care and love they put into the farm, and how they commemorate their life as cranberry farmers through beautiful photo books and portraits.



It’s not just his immediate family that Brian enjoys working with in cranberry farming, his dad and one of his brothers are also cranberry growers. Sharing experiences, knowledge and even equipment all adds to the experience and enjoyment of cranberry farming for him.

Clearly being outdoors is where Brian feels most comfortable. When not out in his cranberry fields he can be found camping, fishing and traveling. While most people’s vision of farming as quite idyllic the reality can be a bit different. No matter the weather, work on the farm must go ahead. If your harvest needs to be brought in, even in the harshest weather, it needs to be done. So it’s very important for Brian to ensure a balance with farm, family and fun.

The daily responsibilities of growing cranberries include looking ahead, and Brian enjoys that part too. He is always looking for ways to improve practices and the farm and feels that this is the way forward to ensure his farm is there for future generations.

That is what being a farmer is about - growing quality, safe products for families in a responsible fashion to ensure BC farms are here for future generations. Brian DeWit and his family are BC cranberry growers who are doing just that, setting a great example for all.