NO-TILL ORGANIC MARKET GARDEN

Producer Case Study

Growing a Legacy Through Regenerative Agriculture

The Story of James Price, Mason Price, and 3P Farm

Franklin Parish, Louisiana



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NO-TILL OMG! Organically Managed Gardening

CAMPTI Field of DREAMS

Producer Profile



For James Price, farming began with a simple goal: spend more time with his son while improving the land his family had owned for generations.

Located in Franklin Parish, 3P Farm sits on property that has belonged to the McMahan family for more than a century. James's maternal great-great-grandfather purchased the land over 100 years ago, establishing a legacy of stewardship that continues today. Although James grew up surrounded by stories of farming and family history tied to the land, he was not stepping into an active agricultural operation. By the time he launched 3P Farm, farming on the property had largely ceased.
An old dairy barn and silo remained as reminders of the farm's past, but the fields themselves had not been actively cultivated for many years.

"The whole intent was better soil health, but also to get Mason involved."
— James Price

Like many beginning farmers, James balanced his agricultural ambitions with a full-time career. As a Deputy Sheriff, his work schedule often alternated between day and night shifts, leaving limited time to develop the farm. Even so, he saw an opportunity to reconnect with the land while creating meaningful experiences for his son, Mason.



Participation in the No-Till Organic Market Garden: Restoring Soil Health and Rebuilding Local Food Systems project provided the knowledge, resources, and support needed to begin that journey. What started as an interest in soil health quickly became a shared father-and-son project centered on stewardship, food production, and learning together.



Using regenerative agriculture practices, James transformed a former hay field into a productive market garden while introducing Mason to the responsibilities and rewards of farming. The experience became about much more than vegetables. It became about restoring a family connection to the land, honoring the legacy of those who came before, and creating opportunities for the next generation to carry that legacy forward.

Learning Through Innovation

The first challenge at 3P Farm was improving the soil. The market garden was established on land that had previously been used for hay production. Years of limited management had left the soil lacking the biological activity and organic matter needed to support intensive vegetable production.

Through the No-Till Organic Market Garden project, James began exploring regenerative practices designed to rebuild soil health naturally. Mulch, organic matter, cover crops, and reduced tillage became the foundation of the farm's management strategy.

Rather than relying on frequent cultivation, James focused on protecting the soil surface and feeding the biological processes beneath it. Over time, these practices improved soil structure, increased moisture retention, and supported greater biological activity.

The project also provided opportunities to learn alongside other producers facing similar challenges. Field days, workshops, demonstrations, and farmer-to-farmer conversations helped reinforce the idea that healthy soils are built through observation, patience, and consistent management.

For Mason, the garden became a hands-on classroom. He learned how crops grow, how soil supports plant health, and how farming requires both hard work and problem-solving.

Together, father and son transformed the garden into a living demonstration of regenerative agriculture in action.



Key Findings

- *Established a productive no-till market garden on former hay ground*
- *Improved soil health through mulch and organic matter additions*
- *Increased biological activity and earthworm populations*
- *Demonstrated successful vegetable production using regenerative practices*
- *Created hands-on agricultural learning opportunities for youth*
- *Strengthened family involvement in farming and stewardship*



"James' Soil Your Undies test revealed limited biological activity early in the project. As organic matter increased, soil life and overall soil health improved."

"We've seen more worms."
— James Price

Building Healthy Soil

Healthy soil became one of the most visible indicators of success at 3P Farm.

At the beginning of the project, biological activity was limited, and the soil showed signs of compaction and reduced fertility. Through consistent applications of mulch and organic materials, James worked to improve soil structure while minimizing disturbance.

One of the most encouraging signs of progress was the increasing presence of earthworms. Earthworms are often viewed as indicators of healthy soil because they help cycle nutrients, improve soil structure, and support biological activity. Their return suggested that soil conditions were improving and that regenerative management practices were beginning to restore natural ecological processes.

Mulch played an especially important role. By protecting the soil surface, conserving moisture, and gradually decomposing into organic matter, mulch created an environment where beneficial organisms could thrive.

These improvements translated directly into crop performance. Healthier soil supported healthier plants, increased resilience during periods of drought, and reduced the need for intensive soil disturbance.

For James, building soil health was not simply about growing vegetables. It was about caring for the land in a way that would benefit future generations.

Growing a Farm and a Community

The impact of 3P Farm extends beyond the garden itself. While James never set out to become an agricultural educator, his work attracted attention throughout the community. Located in an area dominated by conventional row-crop agriculture, the small regenerative market garden stood out. Neighbors, local farmers, and passersby frequently stopped to ask questions about the practices being used and the results they were seeing.

Social media also became an important connection point. Through regular Facebook posts featuring harvests, crop updates, and photos of Mason working in the garden, James built a loyal customer base. Many customers would contact him directly after seeing photos of fresh produce available for sale.

Direct marketing became the primary outlet for farm products, while a local grocery store also purchased produce from the farm. These relationships helped connect community members with locally grown food while demonstrating the viability of small-scale regenerative production.

Perhaps the most meaningful outcome was the opportunity for James and Mason to work side-by-side.

As Mason became increasingly involved in planting, harvesting, and marketing produce, he developed both agricultural skills and entrepreneurial experience. One season alone, he earned approximately $1,500 selling watermelons—a tangible reminder that farming could provide both personal and economic rewards.
The vegetables were important.

The time spent together was even more valuable.



"The vegetables were important, but the time together was priceless."





Looking Forward

Today, James continues to expand the vision for 3P Farm.

Future plans include increasing fruit production through the establishment of blackberries, blueberries, and fruit trees while continuing to improve soil health throughout the property. Each new planting represents another step toward creating a diversified and resilient farm system. The long-term goal is not simply to grow more food. It is to create a lasting agricultural legacy.

James hopes that the lessons learned through regenerative agriculture will continue benefiting both the land and the family for years to come. Mason remains actively involved in the farm and continues to participate in production and marketing activities.

Together, they are building something that extends beyond a single growing season.

They are creating a future rooted in stewardship, hard work, and shared purpose.

Key Lessons Learned

- Healthy soil is the foundation of successful farming.
- Small improvements create lasting change over time.
- Regenerative practices strengthen resilience and productivity.
- Farming provides valuable opportunities for youth development.
- Stewardship today benefits future generations.

Key Themes from James' Journey

- Family Legacy
- Beginning Farmer Success
- Soil Health
- Youth Entrepreneurship
- Stewardship
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Community Connections
- Local Food Systems
- Farmer-to-Farmer Learning
- Patience and Persistence

My great-great-grandparents farmed this land. My great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents farmed this land. I'm farming this land now. I hope that one day my children and grandchildren will farm this land too."

— James Price

Closing Reflection

James Price's journey demonstrates that preserving agricultural heritage requires more than remembering the past—it requires investing in the future. Through regenerative agriculture, he transformed a dormant piece of family land into a productive farm while creating opportunities for his son to experience the value of stewardship, entrepreneurship, and hard work. Together, James and Mason are proving that healthy soil, strong families, and thriving communities are built one season at a time.