Going through the process of converting the farm to certified organic production in 2001 was not difficult for Peterson. “We were already organic in our fertility,” he said. “We’ve been using chicken manure as fertilizer for over 100 years.” Since the farm already had some organic systems in place, deciding to stop using synthetic herbicides and pesticides was easier. Peterson acknowledges that he had to do something to keep the farm in business and organic markets are more stable and create a better return on his investments.

“They convert energy from the sun and combine that with water and nutrients to create food for humans,” Vernon said. “We call them trees.”

TO PURCHASE: Wholesale from Homegrown Organic Farms. CSA from www.abundantharvestorganics.com