

Abbey Dickhudt:

My name is Abbey Dickhudt. I use she/her pronouns, and I'm from Mankato, Minnesota. I have a big family, which is important to me. And I went to school at the University of Minnesota Morris. I just finished there in the spring of 2019, and now I am farming in Litchfield, Minnesota at a vegetable farm.

Our CSA, which stands for community supported agriculture, which is the weekly box of vegetables. So on this farm, we water two different ways. We water by these big irrigation pipes that are really easy to move around or drip, which is a slower water system that you could put on vining crops.

And we have a well here that we pull water from. And one thing I think about a lot is how we have to track our usage to report at the end of the year. But other than that, we still have an abundance of water available to us. So one of the things I'm curious about is, what is one way we manage and conserve that.

The best type of watering, I think, is when it comes from rain and it's at the right time. But of course, rain goes on its own schedule. We got rain this weekend, but it was only a 10th of an inch. So it wasn't enough to really soak the plants. So that's why we've been doing more watering.

Last year, I also helped a lot with the field irrigation and trying to learn more about it. And this year, I'm really curious as to, how do you water this much ground, especially in a dry season? How do you get things covered? And then playing with the weather? Because I think the best would be if you could have rain just cover your farm once a week, but that doesn't happen.

I know that we have to do water testing to assure that it's clean and safe water, especially because we wash the produce with it. And then that produce then goes to people's homes.

Especially as harvesting starts up four days a week, watering gets dependent on what the crop needs, what rain is coming, as well as when you're harvesting it. Because some things you'd want to be dried out before you harvest it. Lettuce, for example, there's a ton of leaves to it. And the more splatter on it, the more chance there is for rot. And so you really want to be watching how much water is on that, as well as it's a vegetable that loves water. So it also is tastier with more. And so that's one where you're trying to balance multiple factors. So water makes this all possible.

The more water is thought of as a common resource, the more it's protected, the more it's uplifted, the more it's celebrated. And so I couldn't be dreaming about the different ways farming could connect people if water wasn't helping plants grow. And if it wasn't nourishing us as we go about our work day, and if it wasn't washing the vegetables as we pack them up. And so those are its utilizations, but it also just nourishes this land.