

## ... PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS



When Neal Ely began his eighth grade FFA project, he never dreamed it could become a business venture employing people in his community.

Neal took his Mother's pickled asparagus recipe and developed a thriving business that recently expanded to include his newest product, pickled peppers. Under development is pickled green beans.

As a teen, Neal said it was difficult to find time for the business and all the other activities required of a start-up business. Learning to be a good time manager is one of his most important achievements—a skill that's still needed as Neal balances a full-time job at a local bank with growing his business. He credits the technical assistance he received from the EDGE program where he learned to write a sound business plan, the Food Processing Center for product development, and GROW Nebraska for marketing assistance among other resources and mentors.

Ely Farms is now operating in its third generation and Neal points to the farm's diversity as helping make it all possible. He is passionate about farming and the new opportunities for Ely Farms and neighboring farms. With assistance from the Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Agriculture grant program, Neal recently opened a processing plant, which offers part-time employment in the Grafton area. Eventually, he dreams of a full-scale operation that provides permanent jobs.

To learn more about Neal visit [www.elyfarms.com](http://www.elyfarms.com), or go to YouTube and check out the podcast about Neal on the GROW Nebraska page [www.youtube.com/user/grownebraska](http://www.youtube.com/user/grownebraska).



Have you visited the GROW Nebraska website lately? They have expanded to feature many of the services available. Whether you are a business owner, or want to support Nebraska businesses, check it out at [www.growneb.com](http://www.growneb.com) or [www.grownebraska.org](http://www.grownebraska.org).