

# Back To Basics with Lora Friemel

**David Crabill:** Welcome to the Forrager Podcast, where I talk with cottage food entrepreneurs about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill, and today I'm talking with Lora Friemel. But real quick, I wanted to check, have you created a website for your business yet? And if you have, do you pay for it?

[00:00:18] A lot of entrepreneurs still think they need to spend money to get a good website, and that is simply not true anymore. I am a really big fan of Square Online. That's what I use for my fudge business' website. And I created a free tutorial that will walk you through how to set up a totally free website in less than an hour.

[00:00:36] And in case you think free also means cheap. It's actually quite the opposite. I think Square Online is hands down the very best website tool out there for most cottage food businesses. So if you wanna learn more, you can watch my free tutorial by going to [forrager.com/website](http://forrager.com/website). All right, so I have Lora Friemel on the show today.

[00:00:57] Lora lives in Scranton, Arkansas and sells jams, jellies, and other canned goods with her business, The Frayed Knot Homestead. Now, I will say this is a different kind of an episode, and I knew it would be when I invited Lora onto the show. One of the things that I really like about the cottage food industry is just how diverse it is.

[00:01:15] It meets the needs of so many different kinds of people. Unlike some of my podcast guests, Lora's cottage food business is quite small, but it's not small because it's unsuccessful. It's small because that's exactly what Lora wants it to be. She is an expert in homesteading, and she sells cottage food products simply as a way to support her true passion of running a homestead for her family.

[00:01:42] Sometimes I see entrepreneurs get so caught up in their business that they forget why they started the business in the first place, but that's not the case for Lora. I like her story because it's a really good example of someone who has found a way to use a cottage food business to support their lifestyle and priorities.

[00:02:01] And with that, let's jump right into this episode.

[00:02:05] Welcome to the show, Lora. Nice to have you here.

[00:02:10] **Lora Friemel:** I'm so glad to be here. Thank you for having me.

[00:02:13] **David Crabill:** So, Lora, I know that you do homesteading, and I don't know exactly how long you've done it. Can you take us back to where this all started?

[00:02:24] **Lora Friemel:** I started, um, homesteading I really have been thinking, I thought about it all the time that I was growing up and I really started in 2014. I was granted the privilege of moving back into the home that I grew up in, and I knew then that I wanted at least a small garden and a few chickens. That year, I literally got out there with a hoe and planted a small garden with, I think there was maybe three tomato plants, a cucumber, and a couple of squash plants. Then after that 2016, I had my second child and my husband was working away on the road. And I needed a way, I wanted a way, I was a stay-at-home mom.

[00:03:03] I wanted to find a way that I could bring something to the table, I guess, so to speak. So I really got into gardening on a larger scale, looking in homesteading and watching other people on YouTube that were homesteading. So I think 2016 was really the pivotal year for me that I really wanted to all in do this and make this my dream.

[00:03:26] **David Crabill:** So, yeah. I saw somewhere that you said that you always like wanted to live the life of the Little House on the Prairie, right?

[00:03:33] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. when I was little, my mom read me all of the Little House on the Prairie Books, and we always watched the shows and I always thought that I really liked the way that their families were close-knit. And even through the struggles, the communities came together and just the way that they lived and how their paw built their house and, they survived.

[00:03:55] That idea has always stuck with me of just, I guess it's like a romantic idea of how the Little House on the Prairie, the Laura Ingalls Wilder, how she lived.

[00:04:06] **David Crabill:** What's funny because it's one thing to read a book and have this romantic idea, it's another thing to live it. What has it been like now that you're actually, doing it, you're living it and experiencing it.

[00:04:18] **Lora Friemel:** It has its ups and downs. Some days are really, really hard. And, then other days, you know, when there's a crop that has like significantly just had a ton of tomatoes one year, and that is like, those triumphs are so enjoyable. But then there's other times when, you know, animals, they're really hard to care for.

[00:04:39] Some get sick and some don't make it. And so the romantic idea, it is there and you have to really, you know, remember those, the really good times in order to get through the harder times.

[00:04:51] **David Crabill:** Now I know that you're really big into homesteading. Perhaps some listeners don't really understand what homesteading is. Can you just give us a brief overview of what it is, or I guess maybe what it means to you?

[00:05:04] **Lora Friemel:** When I started out, you know, I was thinking of the clothes line, where I would dry clothes out in my yard and make homemade bread and cook a really good homegrown dinner every night. And we'd have chickens in the yard and our garden would be beautiful all the time. And that, I think is the idea that a lot of people have about homesteading.

[00:05:26] And it is a beautiful idea, but. I want people to know that your homestead is whatever you want to make it. If you grow one tomato plant, that's great. You know that's a great place to start and you can throw away everybody else's ideas of what they think homesteading should be and make it your own.

[00:05:43] And then more people might, would join in the movement to homestead if we didn't all go off of the ideas of everybody else.

[00:05:52] **David Crabill:** Well, you've definitely taken the concept to. An extreme level, right? Like you're trying to produce most of your family's food from your homestead. So can you explain like, what that goal is and, and where you are on that path?

[00:06:07] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. My first goal was I wanted to garden 50%. Learned to can. I wanted to get 50% of our vegetables out of our garden for the year. And then the next year I added animals to raise meat from, and I wanted to have 90% of our meat from the animals we were raising.

[00:06:24] And so gradually through the years, I have made it to the point where we have, probably 90% of the vegetables we consume in the year that I grow ourselves, and then almost a hundred percent of our meat comes from our

land too, besides beef, because we do not have enough land to actually raise any beef, but we do raise most of our meat.

[00:06:47] **David Crabill:** And so are you trying to work up to the point where you grow a hundred percent of all of your family's food from the property?

[00:06:56] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Uh, fruit has always been an issue, three years ago we planted some fruit trees. We probably have about 12 peach and apple and pear trees, which aren't producing yet, but that will be, add quite a bit to our fruits and vegetables that I can preserve per year.

[00:07:14] And we have talked about trying maybe like a meat breed of sheep in order to use that instead of the beef that we're having to source locally and trying to do that in order for us to be raising 100% of our meat.

[00:07:30] **David Crabill:** Well, I'm just thinking about, you know, you're obviously talking hyper-local food here and a very sustainable way of living. That also comes with the cost of not getting to utilize, the global food production that's out there, right? Like, are there some things that you miss out on because you're so focused on producing everything yourself?

[00:07:54] **Lora Friemel:** No, I don't think so. we have three kids And so we still eat fast food. We probably don't eat fast food as much as you know, the majority of people, but we still do. We still will go get McDonald's and on busy nights we still do, you know, easy dinners.

[00:08:10] I'll still make hamburger helper occasionally and things like that. I don't feel like we miss out on much of anything. You know, we will go try new restaurants and we enjoy trying different places,

[00:08:23] **David Crabill:** So you're not trying to make it like a hundred percent right? It's not a goal of yours to have a hundred percent of all of your family's food come from the property.

[00:08:33] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah, because there's no way that we could get by with things like rice or you know, our grains. There's no way that I could still. Where we are at, or probably even, you know, time wise with me being the one that's home and my husband working, I don't think that there's any way that we could provide completely 100% things like rice or grains, things like that.

[00:08:56] **David Crabill:** Yeah, that makes sense. I mean it's, it's a balance, right? Although I'm sure there are some people that do have that goal

[00:09:02] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:09:03] **David Crabill:** restricting themselves to whatever they can produce.

[00:09:06] So I know you initially, you know, little House on the Prairie and you started out homesteading for yourself and for your family, and it was just, I think a personal goal for you.

[00:09:18] At what point did you feel like, oh, maybe I can make some money from this too?

[00:09:23] **Lora Friemel:** Okay. So in, 2020 with Covid feed prices skyrocketed I mean they have probably doubled since then. What I was paying prior to 2020. So I really had to reflect in and try to make some changes deciding, you know, where am I going? How am I going to, make this extra money to provide the feed for my animals that we need here?

[00:09:45] And I make a whole lot of jams and jellies anyways. my middle child, he'd at least one peanut butter and jelly a day. He loves the jellies, but when I would make a batch of jelly, you know, it would turn out seven or eight jars of jelly and I would put some up and then, that just adds up.

[00:09:59] And as much jelly as I was putting up, there was no way we would consume that in a year. So I decided I would start offering those to my local community to try to offset some of the feed costs that was happening.

[00:10:11] **David Crabill:** So you didn't have like a. innate desire to want to become an entrepreneur initially, like this sort of just came out of

[00:10:19] **Lora Friemel:** Yes, yes.

[00:10:20] **David Crabill:** And did you at that point look into like, was it legal, like what the licensing was like in Arkansas?

[00:10:27] **Lora Friemel:** Yes, I did actually. have a few really good friends. I do frequent farmer's markets too. And I had some really good friends that I, I messaged and I said, in order to sell my jellies, how do I have to have them labeled? Is there anything specific that I need to do? And they went ahead and went over the, you know, the laws in Arkansas, they're pretty good.

[00:10:46] They're, they make it pretty easy for us. that I would on the label, you know, have my farm, have my address, have what is in my jellies, and

when it was made and, and right on there that it was home produced. And then that's basically what I need to do in order to sell it.

[00:11:02] **David Crabill:** Yeah, Arkansas now has one of the best laws in the country, and I don't remember exactly what it was like before 2021, which is when their food freedom law was enacted. But I know now, you know, you can do acidified foods and you can do canned foods and all that stuff. So it seems like it's really right up the alley of what you were already doing anyway.

[00:11:23] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Yes.

[00:11:24] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I did see a post of yours where you had Joel Salatin's book Everything I Want To Do Is Illegal. And said, you know, "I feel like that sometimes." where do you feel restricted when it comes to what you want to do?

[00:11:39] **Lora Friemel:** So if I were to want to offer, because I raise pastured chicken for us to eat, and I also raise pastured rabbits for some of our meat. And if they're really healthy, you know, they're super healthy raised and super good for us.

[00:11:55] But I can't just sell those to anybody obviously for safety reasons. But that could have been where that stemmed from was that sometimes it feels like that you're held back from trying to help other people, but it's not necessarily being held back because of safety reasons. It's just sometimes you feel held back.

[00:12:15] **David Crabill:** it is interesting. I mean, Arkansas has a food freedom law, but it's not at the level of some of the food freedom laws out there that do allow you to sell certain number of chickens, certain number of rabbits and all that. So I could definitely see them amending their law to get there someday.

[00:12:30] But I'd say also a big restriction is if you wanted to sell anything perishable, that would definitely fall outside of the realm. Like, I don't know if you've wanted to do that, but yeah, that would also be a big one where you couldn't do that. Now

[00:12:45] I know they also allow like acidified foods and have some extra restrictions on that, which it would be like, you know, you need to use an approved recipe, or you need to get your product tested from a lab, or you need



to test each batch with a pH meter. Um, how do you make sure that your products are safe?

[00:13:03] **Lora Friemel:** Okay. So I am pretty sure that Arkansas laws unless they have changed recently with like salsas and then like my cowboy candies as long as I am using an approved recipe and canning them properly, that I am still able to sell them as I do the jellies, as long as they're labeled properly too.

[00:13:22] **David Crabill:** That's right. Yeah.

[00:13:24] **Lora Friemel:** I am not like a rebel when it comes to canning. I have to use a recipe even for my own family. I'm not going to, you know, use something that does not come out of like my ball canning book, or from an approved recipe. It has to be approved for me.

[00:13:40] **David Crabill:** So why do you feel like home setting is important?

[00:13:47] **Lora Friemel:** Well, I have a little bit of a story. My son came to me, Grayson, my middle child. He's seven years old. And he, during dinner, he turned to me last night and he said, mom, I can't wait to shuck corn at the picnic table with you and papa again this year. And I looked at him and I said, yeah, I can't wait either.

[00:14:05] And he said, I really love sitting at the picnic table and talking with you guys. And that has been my drive, my kids and knowing the importance of our food and how it's raised and you know, and even for farmers, how hard it is for these massive scale farmers How hard it is for them to get their crops to our table or the meat to our table.

[00:14:28] How hard that that is. I want my kids to know that it is extremely hard and to appreciate that. And so even when they're older and if they don't choose to have a garden or they don't choose to, you know, live the way that I do. That they will still have that appreciation for their food.

[00:14:45] **David Crabill:** I was wondering about that, like I know you're into the homesteading thing, but you also have three kids at home I was just wondering what do they think of the, all this, homesteading thing? Like are they into it? It sounds like, I guess they are.

[00:14:59] **Lora Friemel:** Yes, I have. Okay. My oldest is 14 and then my middle child is seven and my little girl is six. My oldest, he kind of came in he was a little bit older when I started this, so his appreciation of it is not as great

as my two younger ones who were basically born into it. But he loves the home cooked meals and he loves vegetables and he has that appreciation for foods. But he is also a teenager, so he's a little bit more stubborn to get to, you know, hop out there in the garden and help me. The two little ones are more than willing and happy to go out and play in the dirt. My husband also, this has been my dream and he goes along with me and helps me and he has really, really gotten into it over the past couple of years.

[00:15:47] But in the beginning it was just my dream. He was not totally into it. He didn't understand, you know, where, why, or where it was coming from or my need to do all these things. He still did them with me, and I guess I would want anybody, you know, listening to know that that's okay. If it's your dream and you're working towards it, then it's okay as long as your spouse is okay with it too.

[00:16:14] **David Crabill:** What do you think changed for him?

[00:16:17] **Lora Friemel:** I really think a pivotal time was in 2020 when. The grocery stores, it was a little bit trickier to find some, some items even for us that we use, you know, flour or Milk and things were harder for us to find even at the grocery store. And he was actually able to see that what I was doing, we had food and we were okay.

[00:16:38] We didn't have to struggle. We didn't have to, you know, plan our meals with fewer ingredients. We still had all of the food from our gardens and the meat from our animals, and I think that that might have been a pivotal moment for him because ever since then he was, a lot more into it than what he was prior.

[00:16:55] **David Crabill:** So, You have the homestead, it obviously serves your family with food. And then you also are now selling items on a regular basis. Now is it just like a side thing or is this something that you're actually like trying to grow into being like a full-time income for your family?

[00:17:16] **Lora Friemel:** Well, I've not really thought into it too much. I think as a side business right now, it is serving the purpose that I intended for it to serve, to supplement our income. And time-wise, I'm really not sure if I could find the time to actually make it a business in itself. Maybe someday. I might, would actually enjoy that.

[00:17:37] I've not actually thought into that a whole lot though.



[00:17:40] **David Crabill:** can you just share what you actually sell currently or you've sold in the past?

[00:17:46] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Well, occasionally I will sew things. I will get into the mood to sew things, and I will offer those to my community. I like to sew table runners. They're quilted table runners. And I make jellies a wide variety of jams and jellies and cowboy candy, which is candied jalapenos. And that is a, big seller.

[00:18:05] It's very good over cream cheese with crackers. I sell those and I also sell fresh eggs. I offer those in a little fridge on my carport at all times. That's one thing that people have to come to your house. And to get, I think here in the state of Arkansas. But that's the way that I have them do it anyways.

[00:18:23] I sell the eggs and then a couple of times a year I will sell some laying hens. I hatch them out. This time of the year, I'm busy hatching out chicks so I can raise them. And then towards the fall I can sell the pullets for a little bit of extra money to supplement our homestead too.

[00:18:38] **David Crabill:** And I was scrolling through your Facebook feed and I saw some baked goods in there. I saw some fruit butter in there. I don't know if you ever sell your honey. I know you produce honey.

[00:18:51] **Lora Friemel:** Well, this will actually be the first year that we hopefully get to harvest some honey in the fall. Our bees, they're, they're doing amazing and I would actually like to have a couple more hives that's future plans. I did used to sell baked goods and I enjoyed it for a while, but then I found myself kind of getting burned out on.

[00:19:10] Just the amount of baking and the amount of time I was actually having to spend in my house in my kitchen. It was taking away from my time of being outside. What I did in the beginning was when I would bake something for my family, I would just bake extra, but that actually turned into something where people were coming to me and it was going to become more of a business in itself.

[00:19:29] And I was getting busier and busier with the baking side of it that I almost burned myself out on it. So my family has actually suffered a little bit because I'm still not quite up to baking a whole bunch for my family since then. So,

[00:19:43] **David Crabill:** I was wondering about that. I mean, with you running the homestead, I know, I can only imagine how much time goes into just caring for the property. I know you grow a massive amount of things on your property, and so just like finding the time to pursue a business on top of that, it sounds like it's been a challenge.

[00:20:07] **Lora Friemel:** It has. And uh, I think that is why the jams and jellies work so well, because it is something that I'm going to have to make for my family anyways. So it is easier to make those in a larger batch and then offer those to our community than it was to just bake on a larger scale. so that this works well for me, but also with, you know, the time, speaking of time when you're homesteading, so much of it is spent on your property.

[00:20:35] But then you still have all of the laundry and the dishes and all of the caring for the tiny humans that comes into it too. And you really have to give yourself grace inside of your household. You have to give yourself some grace because your house is not gonna be perfect. It is quite messy.

[00:20:50] There's, messes everywhere most times of the year. This time of the year is the messiest of all my house can be a disaster most days, but I have to be okay with it in order to do what I am doing.

[00:21:04] **David Crabill:** So do you feel overwhelmed? Uh, A lot of the times.

[00:21:10] **Lora Friemel:** When it comes to the farm, the homestead part of it, I don't feel overwhelmed. I am really, really good at reflecting in, in that area I kind of have like a strict policy on the farm as far as. What I have going on, and I'm really good at scaling back when I need to, to prevent homestead burnout because that is a very real thing too.

[00:21:33] But in the house, I like order, I like things to be a certain way and I like things to be clean. But running a farm and having a, a family with small children, that is not always the case. So that is where I'm probably most overwhelmed, is just in the daily routine of my family and trying to be okay with the messy aspects of my house.

[00:22:00] **David Crabill:** I was just thinking about the pandemic. You know, it was a pivotal point for your husband and it's a pivotal point for everyone obviously. But one thing that came out of the pandemic, I think was a renewed interest in gardening, saw a lot more people trying out gardening at their home.

[00:22:18] I mean, you would agree with that? Yes.

[00:22:20] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Yes. And it seems like a lot of people have really stuck with it too.

[00:22:25] **David Crabill:** Right. So I was just thinking, you know, a lot of people have taken up gardening and now have gardens and not I'm sure at the level that you're at, but you know, they, they have this produce and, maybe is too much for their family, whatever, and they're thinking, oh, like I could actually make some money with this.

[00:22:44] And I'm just trying to think like, is homesteading something that you would recommend to someone as like a practical business opportunity? Does that make sense?

[00:22:54] **Lora Friemel:** Yes, there is actually a program, I think it's called CSA Community Supported Agriculture. I think that that is what it's called. And it is essentially where you, sell shares of like your crop. somebody can pay you so much a month and then receive that amount of produce from your farm back to them.

[00:23:16] You could do it on a weekly basis, a monthly basis, and you know, for any amount. So this could look like eggs, this could look like crutched vegetables or whatever you have at that time of the year. And you can offer it at different times of the year that suits your homestead. those are really, really cool.

[00:23:31] It's not something I have ever really gotten into because I feel like with our land and the way that, you know, our gardens have produced, I have my garden set up to where they produce for my family. I wish that I could do something like a CSA because that is, like, if I were to get into any business venture, that would probably be what it would be.

[00:23:50] It would be having bigger gardens and being able to offer this produce to the community. But the CSAs are actually really, really, it's really, really cool.

[00:23:59] **David Crabill:** Yeah, so like when you have extra produce on your land, you always have a choice, right? Like you could just sell the produce as is, which is what you're talking about with the CSA, or, you know, take it to the farmer's market, or you can create a value added product, right? You can take that product and try to make it into something, you know, like a cottage food product.

[00:24:19] So is that like a choice that you make often in trying to determine if you're gonna just sell the produce whole or if you're gonna actually like make something else out of it to try to add value to it?

[00:24:31] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah. It seems like every summer I always want to offer more of my gardens to people and share it with people, but when it comes down to it, I get to doing my math, my garden math, and I think, well, I better preserve this. I better preserve this. So that way that, you know, we make it through until next year.

[00:24:51] And that ends up turning into things like salsa and then things like jams or relishes and canned tomatoes for tomato sauces. And that ends up turning into food that I put a jar up and put in my pantry, but preserving the food, jarring it up and turning it into a bigger recipe, mixing the vegetables together and canning it into something that's more, I guess is kind of my goal.

[00:25:14] **David Crabill:** When you're planning out your garden for the year. are you just thinking in terms of what's my family going to eat or are you also thinking like what's popular when it comes to selling?

[00:25:26] **Lora Friemel:** When I plant my garden, my family's growing and my kids are growing and they're eating more every year, and I know the vegetables that they like. I know what my family will eat. So every year I kind of do some math on how much of what I need to grow, and then I plant that and it changes every year.

[00:25:44] I keep up with it in my homesteading journal. I keep up with what I plant, but I do try some different things just so that my kids can try different vegetables. In the beginning, I think I grew more for what is cool, what I could offer to the community, but it just never really panned out the way that I hoped that it would.

[00:26:04] **David Crabill:** You said that you, create a lot of different kinds of jellies. I was just wondering like are there certain jellies that have sold much better than others?

[00:26:14] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. It seems like the fruits that grow in my area here, I think we're seven B or seven A grow zone, so strawberries and blackberries, blueberries and elderberry grow pretty well here. Those are some of the most popular that I sell throughout the year, all times of the year. Also, people really like jellies that have jalapeno in them, so I've been venturing out into, I was offering just jalapeno jelly, then I mix strawberry and jalapeno.

[00:26:48] Then I did raspberry jalapeno jellies and people really, really, really like them. They are good. They are great. They had that hint of jalapeno flavor to them, but the different jellies like that seem to be doing pretty well too.

[00:27:01] **David Crabill:** Just scrolling through your feed, it looked like you do quite a lot of experimenting in the garden, in the kitchen. Like it just, it seems like you do a lot in like with what the time you have.

[00:27:13] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Yeah, I do. it is hard to explain how much I actually enjoy being able to go and work in the dirt. And I like to try new things to see how a plant will grow under different circumstances, because plants are, are, they're pretty amazing. There was one year, I think it was 2018, I was planting my fall garden and it wasn't really a fall garden because I did not have a spot that was tiled up, or I didn't, you know, have a prepped bed or anything like that.

[00:27:40] So I planted. I don't know, 10 or so broccoli plants directly into my yard, and the leaves fell from our oak tree and it mulched around them essentially. And I more or less just let them be to grow on their own. And they grew into the biggest broccoli that I have ever grown to date. that just amazes me.

[00:27:59] I don't know, all the little experimenting, just seeing how things will grow. It's just, it's a big joy.

[00:28:05] **David Crabill:** I'm sure with all the experimenting, there are times where things don't go so well. Well, are there any instances that come to mind where, I don't know, learning opportunities or, or things that haven't worked as well?

[00:28:20] **Lora Friemel:** the first time we planted fruit trees, it was probably four years ago. We bought Clarence fruit trees, my dad and I, he comes and he helps me here every day with the animals and the farm chores. He is a big help, but we bought Clarence fruit trees at the end of May and we planted them at the end of May and it's already getting hot and dry at the end of May here.

[00:28:42] So we planted them and they failed. They died that summer. Miserable. It was horrible. so that was a fail. I have tried dairy goats and I love goats. I love, the way that they are. They're little attitudes, but I only like them for so long until that they are just, they're too much. So things like that are what I can think of right off hand.

[00:29:03] **David Crabill:** So from looking at your Facebook page, I see that I think you're the first actual forager that I've had on the show before. I mean, I know foraging for food is a thing, but you do, you do source some of your food from the wild, right?

[00:29:20] **Lora Friemel:** Yes. Yes. And I love to, I love to learn about our native plants that are both medicinal, edible, and they're growing right in our yards. As long as, you know, you're sure that there's not been pesticides or herbicides or anything that has gotten on them, and I'm sure about our yard. But, you we have a tree that is in part of our property that has been dead and down for a while, and we actually have oyster mushrooms that have been growing on them for about three years.

[00:29:47] And so I'm able to go and source some mushrooms from that. And there's, you know, plantain and there's, there's, I have mullen out here growing. There's just so many plants. That we used to, you know, our ancestors ate and used medicinally and to eat that are still growing in our yards, but we have forgotten about them.

[00:30:08] So with a good book, a good foraging book from somewhere, or the use of Google like I use, you can make sure that you know what you're foraging is correct in order to not make mistakes. And I, I love it. I think that it's a, a great way to get down to the earth.

[00:30:26] **David Crabill:** Well, it's funny because when my friend came up with the name for Forrager, this was over a decade ago I honestly didn't even know about that whole world. And you know, we just came up with the name for a different reason and then I quickly learned about this whole world of foraging and that I, I never had been familiar with before.

[00:30:44] So just kind of funny. I mean, the name Forrager is not related to that world, but it's just kind of funny that know, I get a lot of people asking about like, if, if that's what I do. But anyway I, I know you like to experiment in the kitchen, you like to experiment in the garden and you like to do lots of different things.

[00:31:02] But a lot of times when it comes to a business, what works is, you know, kind of honing down your menu. Like a lot of my guests would say, you know, parrot down and focus on what really works well. And I was thinking like, if you were to sell something that started to sell really well, like the jalapeno jellies or whatever it may be, Do you think you would be able to like focus on that or have the desire to grow the business?



[00:31:32] Even if it meant like losing some of the diversity that is in your life or in your garden or in your kitchen?

[00:31:40] **Lora Friemel:** Do you mean if I would be willing to give up some part of homesteading to specifically grow the jelly business?

[00:31:45] **David Crabill:** Yeah. Like if that, if that's what was taking off.

[00:31:49] **Lora Friemel:** I don't think that I would ever give up part of homesteading to, I think that I would try to make it work. Both work. I'm pretty hard worker and I'm pretty good at multitasking, but there's no way that I would ever give up part of the homesteading if it meant going back like the food that I'm bringing to my family. I would not give up any, part of homesteading. It's definitely my joy and, and my dream that to keep doing this, I'm driven to keep doing this so I don't, I'm not sure that I could see a jelly business being more of a dream than homesteading, but I could see the two working together.

[00:32:28] **David Crabill:** Right. So you like have this innate passion for homesteading and then out of that's coming this side business. Do you think that that's important to have that? Like personal passion first, in contrast to someone who maybe is like, oh, this could be a good way to make money, and then they enter homesteading because of that,

[00:32:49] **Lora Friemel:** No, I kind of, money comes into homesteading just because of, buying feed or paying for our water bill and things like that. I save a lot of the seeds and I do a lot of things to make this a more frugal way of living. The bonus money for my jellies to help the costs that I do have. Is great.

[00:33:11] They work so well together and I love making jellies. It is a quiet project, a quiet job, and I can quiet my mind and focus on making yummy goodness.

[00:33:22] I just, I feel like with homesteading, It's less about the money and more about surviving without it, which of course you can never, because we still have mortgages and we still have insurance, and we still have electric bills because we are not solar.

[00:33:35] And someday, someday maybe, you know, so we still have all these other bills, so we still have to have money. But with homesteading, it almost feels like you get sort of a break from that because you're putting less money into your food. You're not, your grocery bill's not as big, but you know, it does

take some money to raise a garden with things like saving your seeds and making your own compost. you aren't spending as much, I guess,

[00:34:00] **David Crabill:** so you know, with what you sell the jellies and, the other things, like, where do you typically sell them? Is it just online? you sell them out in the community anywhere?

[00:34:12] **Lora Friemel:** yes, I do. I offer them on my Facebook page. I keep a large quantity here with me. But I also, there is a shop in the town that I live in Scranton, I, I keep around 24, a variety out there at a time, and I restock them weekly. That works pretty well. I would like to find a couple other places to put them out, but with the time crunch, you know, in the fall I will have more time and I plan.

[00:34:38] I do plan to grow it my business a little bit more and find somewhere in a couple of the other local to me towns to put a display of my jellies there. I have not thought about shipping too much. I know people do ship jelly, but I don't like the idea of selling my jelly for my price and then somebody having to pay shipping as well.

[00:35:00] I don't, I don't know, for some reason I don't like that idea, so I'm still stuck on that.

[00:35:05] **David Crabill:** Well, what do you price your jellies at?

[00:35:09] **Lora Friemel:** They're \$5 a jar.

[00:35:11] **David Crabill:** And how big are the jars?

[00:35:13] **Lora Friemel:** They're eight ounce jars.

[00:35:16] **David Crabill:** Sounds like a very fair price to me. I, I'd say that sounds actually pretty low for a jar of jelly.

[00:35:22] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah, I keep up with my ingredients and how much each specific batch of jelly costs me to make. And then you know, keep up with the time that it makes, takes me to make each specific batch of jelly. And then I do the math and I try to keep it that. I'm making, half of the \$5, so half of the cost is my cost and then half goes to me, if that makes sense.

[00:35:47] **David Crabill:** right? Half is what you're paying yourself. I mean, there should also hopefully be like a profit on top of that, right?

[00:35:55] **Lora Friemel:** There always is. Yes. So my time is kind of put into. The first half and then the profit is the second half, so \$2.50 for cost and time of each individual jar, and then \$2.50 goes towards profit.

[00:36:13] **David Crabill:** I mean, I've made a fair amount of jelly myself. I know how time intensive it is. Are others in the community selling jars of jelly for this amount? Like it just seems like I don't know. When I hear \$5, and I know everything is regional, but like, to me it sounds like, well, you're not really making a lot of money on that.

[00:36:33] **Lora Friemel:** I really don't make a lot of money and that's not necessarily the goal to make a lot of money. I do like offering, you know, a homemade product to the community to where that they don't have to overspend. I'm still making a little bit and it does cover. Some of my cost. There are other people, there's a little lady, a little old lady that lives in our community and she actually started selling jellies a long time ago, and she still, as far as I know, sells them for the same price.

[00:37:02] And I don't really wanna, you know, go over her head and, and, make more money, I guess, than she does. so yeah, I don't know. I've not really thought about it. I, like I said, the money is just kind of, I could maybe someday, but I'm okay with the cost of it and what I'm making and also our community is, it's very small.

[00:37:21] It's a very small 222 population, and we aren't wealthy community. So I, I just, I don't. I can't find it in me to just charge an extra. I should, but I can't find it in me to charge people a whole lot of money.

[00:37:38] **David Crabill:** Well, I think one of the nice things about a cottage food business is I tell people, you know, it's whatever you wanna make it, right? It's, it's your choice, it's your business. And so it sounds like the value that you get out of selling isn't just the value of the money, right? It's the value of sharing this with your community and sharing part of your crop.

[00:38:01] And that probably ties all the way back into your whole passion of why you started home study in the first place.

[00:38:07] **Lora Friemel:** Yes, definitely. definitely

[00:38:09] **David Crabill:** but you said you would like to grow it more, maybe not grow the price, but you would like to I mean, I don't know if you do

anything to market your products or if you just want to get them in more stores or, or displays?

[00:38:22] **Lora Friemel:** I post them on Facebook and I think I would like to this fall start by trying to find a couple additional places to place them on display and then maybe eventually trying to ship. But I'm not quite there yet.

[00:38:36] **David Crabill:** Well, you said that you restock every week at the shop, and you also, as of now have almost a thousand followers on Facebook. So you clearly uh, getting people's attention.

[00:38:48] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah, I, I hope, I hope that I'm inspiring people to get out there and grow something and, and, you know, really get into the dirt, get their hands dirty. I hope that I'm inspiring people. I hope that it can be an inspiration.

[00:39:02] **David Crabill:** Well, speaking of that, I saw you started a YouTube channel, what, a couple years ago?

[00:39:08] **Lora Friemel:** yes, I did. I started a YouTube channel and I thought that that was something that I could keep up with, and I did enjoy it to an extent, but it was also a lot of dragging camera, you know, than sitting in the house. I don't like sitting in the house, sitting in the house in front of a computer to edit a video, posting the video to YouTube.

[00:39:31] It just added a whole another being inside instead of being outside. And I didn't necessarily like that, but I, I might, I might start posting some smaller videos. There again, I've been thinking about it. I'm just not quite there yet.

[00:39:46] **David Crabill:** What inspired you to start the YouTube channel in the first place?

[00:39:51] **Lora Friemel:** My son, my 14 year old, he was probably 12 at that time, I watched about three homesteaders that have YouTube channels. And my son said, you should do that. I will help you do that. And he did at first, he did a pretty good job at helping me. He got me going because I am not tech savvy in the least. as it went on, I enjoyed it for a little bit and then it was not too much time in the house.

[00:40:17] **David Crabill:** I was just wondering, was the goal solely to, you know, just try to inspire her and share, or was there also a hope there of

potentially having an income coming from a YouTube channel as well?  
Because that's obviously a reason why a lot of people start a YouTube channel.

[00:40:35] **Lora Friemel:** I think it was both of those at once. I know with me, I'm a very visual learner, so if I need to learn a new skill here, I usually do go to YouTube and watch what I need to do because can see it to be done and then I can do it myself. And I felt like if I did this for people on my YouTube, maybe that they would know, you know, a little bit better, it would show them a little bit better of what, how they could do things. But also there was the, you know, the idea that, okay, if I keep this going long enough and I build up my following, then I could maybe monetize it. so I think it was both.

[00:41:10] **David Crabill:** it does take a long time to monetize a YouTube channel, so yeah, is. It's a lot of time, probably inside editing on the computer to get to that point. Uh,

[00:41:21] **Lora Friemel:** Yep.

[00:41:22] **David Crabill:** now if there was somebody who was interested in starting to do home studying or, you know, maybe interested in selling, starting to monetize what they grow from their home, like, what would you recommend to someone who is looking into this?

[00:41:38] What should they plant first or what should they know?

[00:41:42] **Lora Friemel:** I would definitely plant fruit trees first, very first thing that is where I did not plant fruit trees because I kept putting it off and procrastinating because plant trees take so long to come to fruition. So if you plant them now, it's going to be several years before you get, you know, a good sized crop from those But the sooner you do it, the sooner you'll reap the benefits. So I would definitely start with fruit trees and also chickens are the perfect starter animal. They are mostly forgiving and not super time consuming to care for. But they can be a gateway animal too. So beware. And definitely then make sure you're on the same page with your partner cause that is really, really important to always have that discussion with them.

[00:42:22] Research and research. Do not stop researching all the different ways you grow vegetable garden and choose what you think is right for you. There's so many different creative options for it and there's no one size fits all. Your garden should definitely bring you joy. Probably not all the time, but there should definitely be joy.

[00:42:38] So that is where I would start.

[00:42:41] **David Crabill:** Well, you said the first thing you'd plan is fruit trees. I understand that's a long term investment though, right? But you still need to have like something that keeps you engaged and going and potentially could maybe short term make some money or be something that you're harvesting for yourself, right?

[00:42:58] Like I would imagine there's something else that you would plant because people might just be satisfied with planting fruit trees for the first year and know that it's not gonna reap any reward. But probably a lot of people need some kind of short-term benefit too.

[00:43:13] **Lora Friemel:** Yeah, definitely. Don't just plant fruit trees in the first year plant, your garden and then each year you can add on to your garden however you need it to be. I would suggest keeping a homestead journal. I write everything down in a book that I call my Homestead journal. I I write down what I plant.

[00:43:29] I try to. Make a map of my garden each year and put what I planted where and how many of each plant that I plant. So that way next year I can look back and be like, oh, well I had an excess of this. I could scale this back. okay, so plant your fruit trees, but also keep going with your other stuff.

[00:43:47] With my goals, I kind of have, I know what all I'm doing now and I know I'm gonna continue to do these two huge gardens. I'm gonna continue with my chickens, but anything that I want to add gets put on the goal list. So like if we were to add sheep for meat purposes, that's on my goal list. Adding more beehives, that's on my goal list.

[00:44:06] All the things that I want to add. So the fruit trees would come from that goal list because it's not necessarily I have to have it right now, but the sooner you plant them, the better because they take so long to come to fruition. But you can plant strawberries for your fruit. They're great plants for fruit.

[00:44:23] You know, they don't make fruit all year, but they are great. Blackberries or whatever's available in the area that you are for fruit, do that too.

[00:44:33] **David Crabill:** Are there certain things that you would not recommend growing either because they're too high maintenance or because they take too long to process and they're just difficult.



[00:44:44] **Lora Friemel:** Yes and no. I can be really bad about, well, in the beginning, growing cool things. You know, a melon that looks cool or a vegetable that looks cool because it's different and that is great if you have the space and the time and you want to do that and that's your goal, do that. But for me, I had to reflect in because I was growing, taking up space, growing all these cool things, and it was space that I needed for. Growing food for my family. So now when I plant and make my garden maps, I set up for the food for my family first, and then I always have extra space left over. So that's the space that I really play in. That's the space that I get to plant those cool, fun new things in. that's, that's kind of what I do.

[00:45:28] **David Crabill:** I noticed a post where you talked about seasonal eating, that's something that you do and you focus on whatever it's growing in a season. Can you just share what that concept is?

[00:45:43] **Lora Friemel:** So seasonal eating is kind of focusing on the crops that grow in your area and that are ready now. So right now We're coming out of like our coal crop season. We don't, we, our broccoli is bolting that's going to flower to make seed and cabbage is doing the same. Our coal crops are the stuff we plant when it's a little bit colder and then when it gets hot, they bolt to seed. So we're coming out of that season and we're in strawberry season. Everybody has strawberries. We're almost in peach season. And, you know, tomatoes are becoming ripe. So the season that you're in, the vegetables that are seasonal are the vegetables that are ready right now. So when you're focusing on what you can eat now, that's the freshest that has come from, you know, the closest and hasn't been having to ship from somewhere else across the United States or some other country and set in a truck.

[00:46:34] And essentially, when it is taking a while to get to you, it's losing its nutritional value. Slowly, but it does lose some. And so when you focus on seasonal eating, you're eating what is ready right now and it changes throughout the year. So later in the fall I will plant my coal crops again. I'll have broccoli and cauliflower and cabbage.

[00:46:54] And so that is another time that I can eat that. Apples get ready in the fall there's, you know, it changes throughout the year so you're always getting a good variety of things, but your favorite things you might not have all of the time. And it's okay to go to the grocery store and buy things out of season cuz we still do that too.

[00:47:12] we really try to focus on enjoying and really missing the, like our tomatoes and cucumbers and things like that. When we get to miss them, they

taste so amazing when you get them again. And we really appreciate them more.

[00:47:26] **David Crabill:** Yeah, that concept of, you know, missing something and then appreciating it more because you didn't have it for a certain time. I was just thinking it's a very good metaphor for like seasonal selling, which is something that a lot of cottage food business owners do where they will offer something that's in season for a short period of time.

[00:47:46] And that's like for the same reasons why you appreciate the seasonal eating or the same reasons why it works so well to sell things for a short period of time. Because there's that anticipation, that building up of it coming and that scarcity. And so, anyway, I don't know if you actually do seasonal selling as well, but obviously, you know, you do a lot of canning, so that takes seasonality out of it.

[00:48:13] But um, just thought it was kind of a cool metaphor.

[00:48:16] **Lora Friemel:** Yes.

[00:48:17] **David Crabill:** Yeah. Do you have a favorite season on the homestead?

[00:48:22] **Lora Friemel:** they're all different and there's something I like about them all. I would say the fall is probably my favorite, the fall I like because I plant a fall garden. Everything is changing. It's kind of the time of the year when I am cleaning things up and putting things away and making the slate blank again for next year.

[00:48:42] So then winter comes and I start dreaming. There's not, not a whole lot of work. So I'm set with my thoughts and of course I still have to care for my animals, but there's no real gardening. So I can sit and I can plan and I can dream. So I get my, my journal back out again, and I start writing down my thoughts and my dreams, how I want it to look this year, what I wanna do different, what didn't work out last year.

[00:49:04] And then come January I start some of my seeds for that go out first, like my broccoli and my cauliflower, my cabbage, they go out first thing in the late winter. So I start those and uh, then, you know, a little bit later I'm starting my tomato plants with pepper plants, things like that. So spring is like this anticipation of let's get the dirt ready, let's get, everything laid out the way that we want it.

[00:49:27] And so we start placing things and we start basically setting up for the summer garden. And then summer, there's so much work, which is exciting too, but it feels like sometimes you keep bringing in this food, you're constantly working in the summer, there is hardly any time for a break. So summer is just busy and fast.

[00:49:46] And it's almost like you don't get to really. Think about it too much you just have to do in the summer. So I really like fall and winter because I can take time to really reset and rere

[00:49:58] **David Crabill:** Well, as you look towards the future, what are some of your goals? Uh, Goals for the homestead, goals for the business.

[00:50:07] **Lora Friemel:** for the homestead. I've always thought that I wanted a dairy cow that is still on the goal list, on the dream list, but I'm not sure it's ever something that I'm going to be able to tackle

[00:50:20] I want to add, you know, to my apiary, I want a couple more, at least beehives.

[00:50:25] I really am really enjoying that. I like the idea of pastured pigs. I would like to have a bigger area that we could actually pasture some of our, pigs for pork.

[00:50:36] That might be it that I can think of.

[00:50:40] **David Crabill:** Well, your opinion, do you think homesteading is something that everyone should do?

[00:50:48] **Lora Friemel:** That everybody should do or could do. I do believe that there are limitations, obviously cities and apartments that limit it. I love the idea of community gardens. I love it. And I, I have like this big, if I had more time and you know, there was just more of me to go out into the world, to the different communities that have vacant lots, you know, that have been sitting there for years and years, and that could be for sale, but you could go to those people that own those lots and ask, you know, Hey, can we garden here until you sell this place as you know, and we will vacate as soon as.

[00:51:26] You sell this place, but can we make a community garden here? And then the community come together and they raise a garden and they share it amongst themselves. That is, you know, this another romantic idea I do think that

even if you have a small yard, I love the idea of, you know, grow gardens, not lawns.

[00:51:45] I think that in a small area you can grow so much. We started with just two acres and our garden was, so small compared to our acreage and we were able to grow almost all of our vegetables from that one big garden. It took a lot of work, but now I have two big gardens and it, it works a whole lot better and it's a whole lot less.

[00:52:05] It seems like the people will work, but it's actually not a whole lot more work just because there's so much more room. But even in a small yard, you know, there are, I won't get into it too much, but there are. meat options that you could raise if you're allowed in a small yard. I know some places you can't have chickens, but you can grow a small garden

[00:52:26] **David Crabill:** So I think that answer was. You know, if it was something everyone could do, which everyone probably could do it to some degree, do you think it's something everyone should do?

[00:52:40] **Lora Friemel:** only if you want to. I don't think that you should, unless you Absolutely, it is a dream for you because it is a lot of work and sometimes, I reflect in and I think, you know, is there a reason, you know, am I crazy? Why do I do this? Why do I want to do this? Why do I love this so much?

[00:52:58] And it does come back to, you know, the way that I wanna raise my kids and the respect I want them to have for the, their food. But I don't know that everybody should do it, even if they could, unless they absolutely wanted to. I wish that everybody wanted to, and that, you know, they did try at least, but I don't know if it is for everybody.

[00:53:18] **David Crabill:** Is your drive or your love for homesteading? It's just because of. Your kids or is it something you think you would do even if you didn't have a family?

[00:53:30] **Lora Friemel:** I would do, even if I didn't have a family, I think. And I really don't know what the drive comes from. I've always felt a pull to the land. And, you know, when I was little, I always, I was raised here, so this is, you know, I'm real close to this patch of earth. I am, I'm real connected.

[00:53:47] I love this place. But I would always go out in the woods. I was always outside even then, and my dad always grew a garden and we always had

chickens, and I knew at an early age how to respect animals. And I knew that some of our animals weren't always going to be, they weren't pets, he taught me to respect that. Not as much as I do now. You know, this would, he would just do this every once in a while. Every so many years we would have a garden or you know, every once in a while we'd raise a pig. But I think having been raised with that little bit of respect for the land and for animals and getting to see what respectful raising of food looks like, that even if it was just me, I would still want to do that.

[00:54:30] **David Crabill:** Well, Lora, thank you so much for taking some time and sharing with us now. You clearly love to help the community. You love to help people. You love to inspire people. You are really an expert when it comes to homesteading growing things, living a sustainable life. If people want to learn more about you, where can they find you or how can they reach out?

[00:54:55] **Lora Friemel:** The easiest way to find me is on Facebook under our farm page, which is The Frayed Knot Homestead. I also have an Instagram and I have a YouTube channel that is not really that large, but there are some cool videos on there too.

[00:55:09] **David Crabill:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing with us today.

[00:55:14] **Lora Friemel:** Thank you so much for having me. It's been fun.

[00:55:18] **David Crabill:** That wraps up another episode of the Forrager Podcast.

[00:55:22] For more information about this episode, go to [forrager.com/podcast/91](http://forrager.com/podcast/91).

[00:55:30] And if you're enjoying this podcast, please take a quick moment right now and leave me a review on Apple Podcast. It doesn't have to be a long review, but it's truly the best way to support this show and will help others like you find this podcast.

[00:55:42] And finally, if you're thinking about selling your own homemade food, check out my free mini course where I walk you through the steps you need to take to get a cottage food business off the ground to get the course. Go to [cottagefoodcourse.com](http://cottagefoodcourse.com).

[00:55:54] Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.