

Dear City of Princeton Staff and Council members,

I would like to express my interest in leasing the farmland the city has available in Bogus Brook township. Adding this additional 68 acres will help our farm achieve some growth goals that we currently have.

Our farm is a small family operation that specializes in corn and soybean production as well as beef and poultry production that we market to the local community through our retail store in Pease called Braun's Market. Our operation consists of Renae and Tim as principal operators and our two boys Henrik (2.5 years) and Lukas (9 months) will be the 4th generation of Braun's to farm in the Princeton area.

We have changed our farming practices significantly from the area standard recently. Our operation is focusing on increasing the health of the soils we farm. We are doing this by reducing tillage and banding nutrients right where the crops will be grown. We also plant cover crops to help increase soil porosity, infiltration and biodiversity. These changes have qualified us to become a Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certified Farm. We are very proud to have achieved this and will implement these practices on any leased land.

The land the city has up for lease has a ditch running through it. By utilizing our strip tillage practices, leaving residue cover and growing cover crops, we will significantly reduce the risk of any soil erosion reaching this ditch. With our banded nutrient strategy, nitrates or phosphates will not be broadcast or blown/washed into the ditch. Nitrates or phosphates reaching the ditch would negatively impact water quality on the Rum River, which affects our entire community. I am hopeful that the other farms bidding on this land also have outlined their strategy for risk mitigation on the watershed.

As a career agronomist we also utilize an Integrated Pest Management strategy to manage weeds, diseases and insects. Our weed and insect control plan relies heavily on scouting the existing problems in the field and coming up with a detailed plan, rather than blanket applications of pesticides to all of our acres. Most farms allow the people selling the pesticides make these plans rather do it in house. Local expertise is a very important factor here. We use the same strategy for soil fertility. Soil samples guide our fertility plan based on each 2.5 acres of the field rather than blanket applications of fertilizer, whether it is needed or not.

We would be willing to offer \$150 per acre or \$10,200 per year for the offered 3-year lease on this property.

We would also be willing to present to the city council or other civic groups what we are doing on our farm as a way to help provide outreach and education to our community. It is very important to us that people know where and how their food is produced to help them make the best food choices they can for their families. We look forward to partnering with the City or Princeton to help grow our farm operation

Sincerely

Tim, Renae, Henrik and Lukas Braun

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