



Vendor Spotlight
July 14, 2017

Howard County Farmers' Market

Nikki Ray

Hi. My name is Nikki Ray and I was born May 27, 1979. I bought the property of Daddy Bob's in January 2011. Mom and Dad (Paul and Regina Ray) owned the land that adjoined Daddy Bob's so I grew up seeing it every day. I always thought it was a beautiful place and that I would like to own it someday.

Daddy Bob's has been a working farm for 15 to 20 years. It was originally owned by Bobby Feemster who grew peaches, blueberries, and blackberries. There are 4 acres of peaches, 2 acres of blueberries and 1 acre of blackberries. We also have $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of muscadines.

During harvest season I spend part of my day on the farm. During off season I work full time at my dad's trucking company, Paul Ray Trucking. We pick the produce early in the morning during the growing season. We have a few workers who help and a blueberry harvester. The rest is picked by hand. We start picking around 6 a.m. every morning. Harvesting the fruit usually takes 2-3 hours. The grading process takes about 2-3 hours, sometimes longer for both. I usually go to the office after that.

In the fall we have to prune and thin and spray the trees and berry brambles,. To keep things growing we fertilize and spray each season. We have a variety of peaches, although the frost got most of our peaches this year. We usually offer Redhaven, Garnet Beauty, Cresthaven and Redglobe.

I sell most everything I grow. Tom Ellis sells the produce for me at the Farmers' Market each week. Stop by his booth this Friday and say hello. We have a U-Pick arrangement on the blueberries and blackberries from 7 a.m. to noon. If you're interested, call me at 870 856 5710. We only have blueberries left and they are \$10.00/gallon. But save my number and don't forget me for next year!

Besides the farm, I love to play golf and also spend time with my family. I've had a small vegetable garden in the past and my advice to anyone who wants to grow a garden is - keep it watered!

