

## Jose Gallardo - Gallardo Organic Farms

“It’s beautiful. For me, organic farming isn’t about selling a product. The best payment I receive is the smile I get from a satisfied customer. I know that I am taking care of them.”

Jose Gallardo loves to learn. He has a knack for picking a trade up quickly and working hard to make that learning stick. From landscaping to mechanics to running a tractor or managing a restaurant, Jose says “I love to learn things deeply, to the maximum.” That’s why the Alba training program appealed so much to him. Not just because he comes from generations of farmers, but because there is a challenge and thrill to learn new things.



Jose grew up around agriculture, and his love for it comes directly from his grandfather. Jose would go to school three days a week, and then work on the farm three days a week to help support his ailing father, his mother and his nine siblings. “My grandfather always used to say, ‘when you do something, do it because you love it, not because you feel obligated.’” He took that lesson to heart, and came to the United States at 17 years old, always looking to learn something new and to find something that he could work at and love.

That mission, to do something because you love it shines through to his vision for his farm. “My goal is to move forward, but not to grow too much or try to keep getting more land. I want to do what I do well; make relationships with the people I sell my products to, and see my son and others eat food that is healthy.” The desire to know what people need is not only in what products to sell, but to “pay attention to the client. Even if they are not in a good mood, the important thing is that everyone must be treated with respect and attention. That is how you can start meaningful conversations.” He loves to learn the new techniques and the tricks to work a changing market, but for Jose, Gallardo Organic Farm is about the people.

“I feel more humble today, because I can help people resolve problems.” Yet, he does worry about the future. He sees big agricultural centers and small farmers like himself struggling to find the labor needed to bring products to market. Graduating from the PEPA program with Alba in 2012 allowed him to see this bigger picture and understand how to plan strategically for difficult situations. “I have to look for more opportunities to learn. In everything I try to learn from the very beginning until the end.” For now, Jose will continue to work hard, bringing a friendly smile, open heart and inquiring mind to all of Gallardo Organic Farm’s customers.

