

Raul and Maria Murillo – Graduates 2010

“Being an understanding person with others is very important. Without that, you can’t do anything.”

Raul is a strawberry man. When he first came to the United States in the 1980s, he worked in the strawberry fields near Watsonville. He worked in conventional agriculture up until a close friend mentioned Alba Organics and its Farmer Education Program. He was intrigued by the organic aspect of the program and signed up. Like most of the PEPA graduates he started off with a small acre, but unlike others, he started immediately selling his product to friends and acquaintances off the property. Today, he owns El Senson Organico. The farm comprises two different plots totaling close to 28 acres. He plants the staple strawberries, and vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and beets.

“What I love is that everything is really healthy. Organic means no chemicals. It means a healthier crop. I love that it is natural. When you think about chemicals, if it’s dangerous and harmful when you put it on the plant, it will be harmful even if you wash it.” The other thing that he enjoys about farming now, is that he doesn’t have the pressure that some big commercial farms put on their workers. “No one is governing me. I can go when I want and set my own limits. I can even hold on to my products and wait until I get the best price possible.”

Raul and his wife work hard on their farms and are looking forward to the day when they can buy their own land, and not just rent from others. Their children in fact, have been inspired by that hard work and their parents dedication to organic farming. One of their children is learning about organic agriculture right alongside Raul and Maria, the other is an engineer, working towards a degree in agronomy.