



BY: DAVID BUSS,  
NESBIT AGENCIES

# Feature: Wise Acre Eatery & TangleTown Gardens:

## True Farm-to-Table

Dean Engelmann and Scott Endres met when they were both horticulture students at the University of Minnesota. Coming from similar backgrounds — both grew up on farms — they shared a unique love and appreciation of farm culture, plants, and animals. They also developed a strong sense of sustainable horticulture practices. With those principles in mind, they started TangleTown Gardens, a garden business fed by their farm in Plato, Minnesota. The first greenhouse crop was grown during the winter months of 2003; that spring, TangleTown Gardens opened for business in the TangleTown neighborhood of south Minneapolis. Since then, the farm has helped feed the garden center, with a landscape division being added later on. The landscape division has quickly grown to become one of the largest parts of the operation.

In 2012, Dean and Scott founded the Wise Acre Eatery, a unique, farm-to-table restaurant operation. Eighty percent or more of the food that is served at Wise Acre comes directly from the farm in Plato. People who frequent the eatery appreciate the approach that Dean and Scott take to the business. The customers understand that the animals and the land are being cared for properly, and it makes the fresh ingredients and meals being served there taste that much better.

The menu at Wise Acre Eatery is carefully crafted, making the best use of each season's harvest, and reflects a focus on cooking from scratch using the freshest ingredients possible. With the majority of ingredients coming straight from the Plato farm, fresh ingredients are not an issue. Scott, who runs the retail side of the business, often describes the food as comfort food that is targeted toward customers who appreciate fresh, high-quality food, produced in a sustainable manner. Using the freshest ingredients makes for more nutritious food and that quality can be seen in every plate that is served. When people see the connection between the land and their dinner plate, they truly begin to understand the vision that Scott and Dean had for their business.

One of the key aspects of both TangleTown Gardens and the Wise Acre Eatery is a focus on setting trends in sustainable agriculture and farm-to-table culture rather than following them. The combination of farm, garden center, and restaurant provide a truly unique experience which is unheard of in mainstream retail centers. Dean and Scott are in the business of selling creativity and sustainability; the accolades they receive confirm that they are taking their business in the right direction.

With a strong focus on community and customers, Dean and Scott are always

looking for ways to give back. Whether that is by supporting civic groups, or holding fundraisers for specific causes, or the more than 15,000 pounds of food they donate to area food shelves each season. They see themselves more as biological farmers than chemical farmers, which is a refreshing change of pace in the modern world of chemical farming and unsustainable growing practices. They have created a model that provides food for more people per acre versus conventional farming and restores and improves the soil with each growing season.

For more information on the Wise Acre Eatery or TangleTown Gardens, you can visit them online at [wiseacreeatery.com](http://wiseacreeatery.com) and [tangletowngardens.com](http://tangletowngardens.com), respectively. +

*David Buss has over 16 years of experience in the areas of risk management and insurance programs. He works with all types of insurance accounts with a focus on the agriculture industry. David received his degree from Ridgewater College in 2000. He has co-authored two books, *Protect Your Legacy, A Handbook for Estate Planning*, and *Keeping Your Farm in The Family, What You Need To Know*. David sits on the advisory council for Nationwide's "Land As Your Legacy." He can be reached at [dbuss@nesbitagencies.com](mailto:dbuss@nesbitagencies.com) or 952-746-4344.*