Seely Family Farm

Third generation mint farmer, Mike Seely, and his wife Candy operate Seely Family Farm. They grow single-cut, premium-quality mint to create essential oils for toothpaste and chewing gum. In addition to mint oil they produce mint soap, mint flea repellent for pets, mint teas, and a variety of handcrafted mint chocolates—including the very popular Seely Peppermint Patty.

Like many small business owners, their business has grown organically. The help they received when they got involved in WSU Vancouver’s Business Growth Mentor & Analysis Program (MAP)—especially on the retail side of their business—was just what this fast growing company needed.

Supported by an instructor and a volunteer mentor and advisor, the Business Growth MAP team of undergraduate business students performed a financial, a market and an organizational capabilities analysis. “The students have asked a lot of intriguing questions that got me thinking about what we are doing and where the company needs to go,” said Seely.

Gaining retail insight

The market analysis was revealing. The student team research showed that Easter holiday had the highest margins for chocolate. “We were always thinking it was Halloween, but Halloween is all about cheap chocolate. The other holidays—especially Easter—are the ones where we get the best margins,” said Seely. The team also provided some recommendations on distribution, branding, packaging and inclusion on QR codes for marketing campaigns.

“The financial analysis helped when we went to apply for financial help at the banks, too.” In addition to the budgeting and cash flow analysis, the Seely’s received input from the team on things like the accounting system and invoice handling.

Putting it into action

The Seely’s mentor follows up with to check in and see how things are going. “He continues to mentor us. He holds me accountable to all the things we need to be doing on the farm and retail side,” Seely states.

“It has been a great experience. We look forward to doing more with WSU.”

Questions?
Contact Mistie Josephson at 360-546-9533 or mistie.josephson@vancouver.wsu.edu

Seely Family Farm
You can find out more about Seely Family Farm and their products at seelymint.com.

Business Growth MAP
To find out more and apply to the program visit business.vancouver.wsu.edu