

# Meadow View

Wisconsin  
Grass-Fed Beef  
Cooperative

## Beef bites:

- The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-op now has **OVER 100 members. Congratulations!**
- **REMEMBER-January 11, 2014 is the Annual Meeting at the Hancock Research station. Details on page 5.**
- *WGBC is actively seeking members who produce high quality grass-fed beef according to our protocol requirements. See page 7 for our new membership incentive!*
- **Invest in YOUR Co-op's future! WGBC Class B stock is still available at \$100 per share.**

New Co-op Number:  
**1-800-745-9093**

## Inside this issue:

Production Update	1
4th Quarter Sales update	2
Producer Profile	3
2013 Annual Meeting minutes	4
Message from the Board	5
Co-op Exposure Events	6
Membership Initiative, Website update & For sale ads	7
WGBC Board Members	8

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## Production Update—Pete Prochnow

The co-op finished the year with a very strong supply of cattle from our membership. In fact, scheduling to enable cattle shipments when preferred was a real challenge. A special thanks to all members who supplied cattle as the co-op needed them this past year.

The outlook for cattle supply in early 2014 is very good. I encourage members to share production plans with me soon to establish their position(s) on the purchase schedule. Reliably charting production plans is imperative for us to pursue new sales opportunities and further establish WGBC as a reliable supplier of premium grass finished beef products. We are steadily attracting new members with established or increasing cattle production plans to market cattle with us. The continued challenge will be staging quality finished cattle to match a steady and growing demand for our cooperative's products.

As we approach 2014 the future of WGBC continues to be exciting. Final results for last year will be available and reviewed at the annual meeting in January. It will also be important to focus on improving our livestock marketing operations and financial results for the cooperative and in turn, our member producers. We look forward to presenting and discussing projected plans at the January meeting and hope you can make time to attend. Thank you.

-Pete Prochnow, Production Coordinator

*“Wanted: 100% Grass-fed lambs and organic certified 100% Grass-fed Beef. If you raise either of these and are a co-op member, please contact Pete immediately for a special marketing opportunity.”*

## **WGBC General Manager's Update YTD Q4 2013 & 2014 Preview**

It is a good time to be a member of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative (WGBC). Improved distribution, strong sales and consistent profitability have allowed us to continue to pay a strong price premium to our producer members. Our gross pay price, including shipping credits averaged \$2.43 per lb hanging weight for finished animals in Q3 2013. Year to date, sales are up 27% vs 2012, and up 25% in the fourth quarter vs the same time last year. Our cattle position has strengthened, giving us confidence that we can supply new opportunities and continue strong growth into 2014.

Other highlights over the past few months include multiple product promotions and product sampling events at all three Metcalfes store locations. We also held multiple sampling events at all Outpost Foods stores in Milwaukee, where we were featured as a main product in their monthly flyer. Consumers want to know where their food comes from and our retail partners value our presence in their stores to tell the story behind our product. Sampling events are critical to maintain sales growth and increase awareness of our brand. If you are willing to consider supporting such an event, and helping your co-op grow, please call me and I will add you to the list of potential candidates.

We sampled and sold products at the Milwaukee Public Television Farmers Market. We attended the annual Wisconsin Grocers Association tradeshow and the Isthmus Food & Wine show in Madison where we showcased our products and solidified trade relations. I'm very excited to tell you that we are about to launch an updated label that better talks to the key attributes of our product. We also now have a branded cardboard box that will make our product look more professional and easily recognizable. In October, we conducted our first lamb and organic grass-fed cattle shipments trials which were very successful. This new sector is an exciting new opportunity for us. If you are a WGBC member who has lambs or organic certified cattle that fit the WGBC protocol, please contact me or Pete immediately. The WGBC also recently conducted a test of an additional processing facility at Pete's Meats in Rudolph, WI. Pete's Meats is USDA certified and will allow us to serve new customers across state lines. They are a fair value for money and we will continue to use them when it is logistically feasible in 2014.

The business outlook for 2014 is very positive. We plan to maintain a strong double digit growth rate of around 20+% while continuing to deliver a positive bottom line. We will again be featured in the Wisconsin National Restaurant Association Tradeshow, Mar 11-13<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Milwaukee. Please plan to attend the annual meeting so that we can hear what you have to say. At the annual meeting we will also announce a new dividend patronage program that can help you solidify and improve your margins as a WGBC producer member.

Thanks to all the producers who delivered finished cattle to the cooperative this year. Your dedication to your cooperative is what keeps us in business. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!!

Rod Ofte – General Manager, WGBC - 608-451-2861

## Producer Profile *-by Kevin Moore*



Gene and Ruth Schreifer along with their son Haakon graze sheep and beef in the hills of Iowa County north of Mineral Point. Their farm consists of 135 tillable acres and another 110 pasture. Gene's parents live in the farmhouse while Gene and his family live six miles down the road in Mineral Point. Gene started with Texel and Charlois sheep and has had as many as 400 head. He started expanding his beef part of the operation last year and currently has 40 head of crossbred cattle. The plan is to expand the beef herd to about 70 head and to downsize the sheep herd to about 100 head. Gene said it's all about labor. He can harvest more grass with less labor with cows

than he can with sheep. Also lambing is much more time intensive than calving.

Gene was born on Long Island and raised in New Jersey. After graduating from Purdue he began looking for a place to start a farm. Gene liked the people and climate in Wisconsin. He bought the farm in 1983 and moved here in 1984. His welcome to Wisconsin came two weeks later when a tornado leveled the town of Barneveld 6 miles to the north. Ruth grew up on a dairy farm in the Westby area and had no interest in farming. Now out of four kids, she is the only one in farming.

Gene was one of the founding members of the Co-op. He enjoys being on the producer end of farming and is comfortable turning over the marketing to those who are good at. Recently he worked with Rod Ofte in an experimental trial selling grass-fed lamb to the Co-op.

Gene is currently the UW Extension agent for Iowa County. Ruth is working in family living education in Iowa County. Gene and Ruth met when they were working as extension agents in neighboring counties. Gene was the 4-H Youth Development agent in Rusk County and Ruth was the 4-H agent in Manitowoc County. Gene transferred to Columbia County and Ruth transferred to Dane County. Gene then worked as the grazing specialist for the Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council. His current position keeps him close to his farm with less travel and a little broader spectrum experience. Gene said his day begins on the farm and ends on the farm. In between, he spends his days outside working with farmers. He also spends a lot of his days sitting around kitchen tables discussing farm financials. He works with new farmers setting up new grass-fed operations, farmers who are facing the realization that they are losing the farm and farmers who are working to transition the farm from one generation to the next. Gene said these days he is working with a lot of landowners out from the city who need help figuring out how to utilize their property.

Gene said the number of farms in Iowa County is growing but the size of the farms is decreasing because of the proximity to Madison. Gene said Iowa County is the third largest beef-producing county in Wisconsin behind Grant and Lafayette. In fact, 7 of the top 10 beef-producing counties are in the Southwest Driftless region. At the turn of the century, this region was used as a finishing area by Chicago slaughterhouses for cattle shipped out of the southeastern states.

Gene says he farms with minimal equipment. He has a tractor for feeding in the winter and a manure spreader. He hires a neighbor who has all the equipment to do his seeding and harvesting. Gene estimated that he would need to put up at least 400 tons of hay per year before he could justify the cost of owning and maintaining his own hay equipment. Gene said, "Too many farms are over capitalized. They have too much equipment and they aren't covering their depreciation costs."

## 2013 WGBC Annual Meeting Recap

### Annual Business Meeting—Ag Research Station, Hancock, WI Saturday, January 12, 2013

**Introduction** – Greg Nowicki, President called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

Nowicki introduced the members of the Board of Directors and key team members of the Co-op. There were 30 people in attendance. Attendees included Co-op members & spouses and key team members.

**Approve 2012 Annual Meeting minutes** – Szomi read the minutes. Motion to approve the minutes as read was made by Endres, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Moore. **Motion passed.**

**Treasurer's Report** – Tracey Hennessey, the Co-op's accountant, was on hand to provide the report. 2012 sales were up 50% at \$697,934. Gross profit for 2012 was \$104,061 minus total overhead of \$82,283 equals a profit of \$24,488. Motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented made by Moore, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lang. **Motion passed.**

**2012 Milestones** – Rod Ofte

- Sales of approx. \$697,934                      Membership is just under 90

Challenges for the Co-op – cash flow issues in making timely producer payments & long term cattle supply

**Sales Summary - Successes** – Rod Ofte

- Our customer profile is 56% retail, 8% wholesale, 28% service (restaurant) and 8% direct to customer.
- Our sales forecast for 2013 is to process 15 head/cycle or a 15% growth

Opportunities for 2013 include: New product launches      Cattle contracting incentive      Website relaunch  
Brand building events & trade shows      Added field time & procurement

**Sales Summary – Challenges**

Consistent supply of good cattle      Increasing competition      Product demo/event support  
USDA Processing certification      Complete utilization of each carcass

Lots of good questions/discussion on logistics of selling product.

**Cattle Procurement** – Pete Prochnow

Pete presented how critical communication and planning is to our cooperative business success. Also, cattle supply is the foundation to our business model of supplying high quality beef products year round. Finally, contracting future cattle shipments should potentially enable increased profitability.

For example: **Cattle Supply** – when we're confident cattle will be available we can focus our marketing efforts.

**Scheduling/Contracting** – enables on-farm planning, assists coordinating transportation [expenses], allows improved processor partner communication and establishes our future cost of production.

**Customer relationships** - depend on reliable pricing, quantity and quality of **our product**.

**Please see a copy of our Purchase Agreement/ Contract enclosed – and consider 2013 cattle sales – now!**

**Finally, a suggestion for a potential per head bonus/dividend for members providing cattle to our co-op!!**

**Website Update** – Mandy demonstrated the new format of the Co-op's website. It can be found at

[www.wisconsingrassfed.coop](http://www.wisconsingrassfed.coop) or [www.wisconsinmeadows.com](http://www.wisconsinmeadows.com).

All members will need to click the green button on the bottom of the Members page the first time they register on the new website to get a new password—even if you had one previously on the old site. The new format DID NOT transfer that information. Mandy would like to start a collection of photos to feature on the website. She especially needs pictures of yourselves or their family, and also pictures of our product cooked. An exciting addition to the website will be the opportunity for member to “blog” about daily life on the farm.

**Board Member Nominations and Election Results** – two seats, both 3 year terms were open for election. Congratulations to incumbents Jon & Lanice.

**Educational Session** - Laura Paine facilitated a discussion on the development of forage finishing operations within the Co-op and funnel feeders from cow/calf operations to these finishers. This was done while the new board met.

**Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 1:16 PM. Up-coming events/classes/conferences for graziers were mentioned.

## Message from your Board of Directors....

Happy New Year! We hope you made it through another very challenging year in terms of weather and that 2014 brings us back to some sort of normalcy.

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 11, 2014 at the Hancock Agricultural Research Station. We want to encourage you to attend this meeting. It is always a good chance to participate in the feedback and decision making process that will help guide us for the next year and beyond. We will share with you our performance results from 2013 as well as our 2014 outlook. We will also touch on some very promising new business opportunities that are in the works. This is also a great opportunity to network with other members.

We have 3 board seats that are up for election. Please consider the opportunity to serve on our board. Contact Greg Nowicki at 715-573-5610 if you are interested and would like to be on the ballot. We will also accept nominations from the floor.

Thank you for your continued support of our Co-op and for helping to make 2013 another successful year. We'll see you in a few weeks.

### WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF CO-OP ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

**Hancock Ag Research Center @ N3909 County Road V, Hancock, WI  
January 11, 2014**

<b>10:00</b>	Call meeting to order Additions / Corrections to the agenda Welcome Membership / Introductions Reading and Approval of 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes	<b>Greg N</b>  <b>Lanice S</b>
	Treasurer's Report / Financial Summary	<b>Tracey H</b>
<b>10:15</b>	Sales and Operations Summary	<b>Rod O</b>
<b>10:45</b>	Cattle Procurement – 2014 Outlook	<b>Pete P</b>
<b>11:00</b>	Board Member Nominations and Elections	<b>Kevin M</b>
<b>11:15</b>	Election Results – Adjournment	
<b>11:30</b>	Lunch	
<b>12:00</b>	Speaker – Cecil Wright, of Organic Valley and the Organic Maple Cooperative	
<b>1:00</b>	Annual Meeting Ends	

**Newly elected board of directors meeting in the Lower Level conference room from 1:15 – 2:00 pm**



# GrassWorks Inc.

22nd Annual

## Grazing Conference

The Patriot Center Wausau, WI

"Green is the New Gold—The Value of Keeping the Land in Grass"

January 16–18, 2014



**\$99**  
Special 1st time  
attendee rate!

Full Conference—\$225  
(member rates apply)

Early  
registration  
ends Jan. 3,  
2014!

### Special Guests:

**Gabe Brown** - Nationally known rancher/speaker will be here for the entire conference giving insight on using cover crops to build soil health on his ranch and grass-finishing beef.

**Dr. Fred Provenza** - Emeritus Professor @ Utah State, will present a keynote on Friday about the interrelationship between the soil, animals & us.

**Jimmy Bramblett** - State Conservationist for WI-NRCS will kick off the conference on Thursday by affirming NRCS's continued commitment to soil & grazing.

We'll have local producers teaming up with knowledgeable speakers presenting on a variety of topics.

### Grazin' Tradeshow

Take a moment to visit with the many business, agency and organization booths that will be on hand to provide a wealth of knowledge & experience.  
Hours: Friday - 8AM-6PM; Saturday - 8AM-2PM

### Thursday, January 16:

Getting Started in Grazing, Successful Strategies for farm transfers, Managing your soil's livestock and Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship informational session.  
Keynote Topic: "NRCS's commitment to Grazing"

### Friday, January 17:

Keynote Topic: "The Link between Soil and Health"  
Participant tracks include Farmland Preservation, Marketing Grass-fed products, Stray voltage issues - Banquet, auction & musical jam session that night

### Saturday, January 18:

Sessions include Horse grazing 101, Getting started in Holistic Management, Herd health & supplementation - and so much more!

Stop by the GrassWorks book store for great reads, some will be featured in breakout sessions!

Visit [www.grassworks.org](http://www.grassworks.org) for online registration, hotel options and more conference updates.

Questions, contact Lanice Szomi at (715)965-8324 or [grazingrocks@gmail.com](mailto:grazingrocks@gmail.com)

*The WI Grass-fed Beef Cooperative is an active sponsor & promoter of the GrassWorks conference and will have a booth there to educate conference attendees & sign up new members. What a great place to discuss grazing issues with other producers, learn new ideas & purchase the "hot" new product for graziers. There's still time to sign up - See you there!*

One of the great things about being "The new kid on the block" is getting out & meeting people. These opportunities, through tradeshow connections, demos, word of mouth, etc. has helped the WI Grass-fed Beef Cooperative open doors to new customers, new producers and even TV show hosts. This Fall, the Co-op was featured in an episode of Mad Dog & Merrill. They were grilling out at Minocqua's Beef-O-Rama and were using some of our beef. It also includes a segment with our President, Greg Nowicki, promoting the Co-op and grass-fed beef. Here's the link to watch the video.

Enjoy!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gnJAnLnHC0&feature=c4-overview&list=UUqBG6MZdjCT54JF-oHIHVtQ>

## Membership Drive Initiative

**Hurry—  
you have until  
January 31, 2014 to  
save your neighbors  
\$300. Sign them up  
today!!**

The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-op announces a membership drive initiative in order to increase production of our grass-fed beef supply and gain more producing members.

***The membership drive signup will run for 6 months starting on November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2013 and run until April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2014.***

From November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2013 through April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2014, a member in good standing will be asked to recruit a producing member/s. The sponsor member would be eligible for the \$20/hd check from WGBC for each animal sold/contracted to the co-op by May 31<sup>st</sup> of 2014.

The new member/s application must be accepted/recorded within the November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 window and up until April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2014 to be eligible.

Once the cattle have been received, a payment schedule to the member sponsor of approximately 4-6 weeks will be followed. The sponsor, when signing up a new member, will record their name or member ID on the membership packet so that we are better able to track who signed up which member/s.

To request membership packets please call Pete @ (920) 210-9177 or download them from our website at [www.wisconsingrassfed.coop](http://www.wisconsingrassfed.coop).

As previously stated in the newsletter—it's a great time to be a Co-op member and 2014 looks to be even better. So contact your friends or meet your new neighbor and tell them the benefits of being part of your Co-op. Hurry - membership fees go up in February!!

### WGBC Website Update -

Members – you can help their co-op without even leaving the farm! We need more submissions for our blog on the website "What's Goin' Down on the Farm". It could be a paragraph or two about something that has happened on your farm, wildlife sightings, cute calf or child, favorite cow or pet, etc. Or it can be as simple as snapping a photo and writing a little one-sentence caption about it. Send photos or articles to Mandy (address on back page).

### **To buy, sell, trade or hire section-**

For sale: 6 Black Angus Heifers 300-400lbs, weaned, no vac. asking \$2/lb. Also has 3 open heifers 800-850lbs, 2 angus, 1 galloway. No asking price offered. Have pictures that can be sent in US mail. Contact Charles Kramer in Eastman, WI @ (608)874-4388.

For sale: Hillside Pastures now offering Red Devon bulls and females for use in grass-based beef production. Visitors welcome at the farm by appointment. See website for additional information. [www.HillsidePastures.com](http://www.HillsidePastures.com). Daniel or Linda Marquardt, Spring Green - 608-588-5367



**Wisconsin  
Grass-Fed Beef Cooperative**

PO Box 945  
Elkhorn, WI 53121

*Return Service Requested*

*Where the grass is greener  
and the beef is leaner!*

General info: [info@wisconsingrassfed.coop](mailto:info@wisconsingrassfed.coop) or  
call **1-800-745-9093**

Member assistance:

[production@wisconsingrassfed.coop](mailto:production@wisconsingrassfed.coop)

Wholesale sales: [sales@wisconsingrassfed.coop](mailto:sales@wisconsingrassfed.coop)



**MANAGEMENT TEAM-**

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608-489-2162

## WGBC Board of Directors & Staff

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New Co-op Number:

**1-800-745-9093**