

Beef bites:

- The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-op now has **125 members!**
- **New Member & Production Incentives for 2015—see inside.**
- *WGBC is expanding and actively seeking new producer members across the state who will produce high quality grass-fed beef according to our protocol requirements in order to supply our customer base.*
- **Invest in YOUR Co-op's future! WGBC Class B stock is still available at \$100 per share.**

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

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Controlling Expectations

by Pete Prochnow, WGBC Production & Membership Coordinator

It seems so obvious; controlling expectations keeps us from experiencing disappointment. We do it almost every day without much thought. As beef cattle producers, the order of business is to eventually market animals. We make farm plans, then we make adjustments, and later we make more adjustments, and so on! Or perhaps we could call it - controlling our expectations.

Even with the fat cattle supply tight, product demand steady and producer pay prices up, the decision when to market our livestock still involves many factors. Each farm has different priorities: animal finish, feed supply, logistics, cash flow, pregnancy checks – the list goes on – and then price! We've all heard about seemingly outrageous prices for cattle the past few months, and the market high is always quoted. What will next week's price be? Speculation is free, but evidence current fat prices are leveling is more apparent lately. I'm not going any further out on that branch, but it is safe to say these are extraordinary times for beef cattle sellers!

So the question for each individual farm remains: What are your expectations?

As a WGBC producer and member, the unique nature of our Cooperative offers you an opportunity to control those expectations. For example, as the co-op's business of marketing fresh beef products year-round continues to prosper, your ownership and opportunity to benefit from it, increases as well.

How, you might ask?

- 1] We can market fat cattle nearly anytime of the year when you're interested in shipping animals – especially when you communicate your intentions in advance.
- 2] Our producer pay price offers a consistent premium of 20-30% over conventional beef prices [using an index-based pricing model that provides stability, transparency and reasonable predictability] along with prompt producer payments for cattle shipped.
- 3] When you ship fat cattle as needed to assist the business, you're also helping the co-op's current profitability and long-term value; The Cooperative you own.

The net result as a producer/member/owner, is you benefit both ways. It adds to your farm's profitability and to our growing business. Perhaps also, allowing you another opportunity to control your expectations.

WGBC General Manager's Update - Q3 2014

It continues to be a great time to be a member of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-operative. Improved distribution, strong sales and consistent profitability have allowed us to continue to pay our producer members significant and consistent premiums vs the conventional market. We are currently offering our producers a base price of \$2.95 per lb hanging weight, plus shipping credits. Year to date, sales are up 47% vs 2013. A good share of this is from multiple price increases over the year. Some of the most positive news is that we are developing a solid inbound cattle supply, but still need cattle. A stronger supply of live cattle will allow us to more aggressively pursue sales opportunities with the confidence that we can actually fill future orders. As supply grows, members will be required to plan better and contact Pete Prochnow well in advance of their desired ship date in order to lock in a specific date. We may no longer be able to accept cattle on short notice, so please plan ahead and let us know what you have available. Your priority in shipping will be on a first come - first serve basis.

Other highlights over the past few months include multiple product promotions and brat launch/sampling events at all three Metcalfes and Outpost store locations. We attended the Wisconsin Grocers Association trade show in WI Dells. Consumers want to know where their food comes from. The connection to producers, who tell the story behind our product, is highly valued by our customers and consumers alike. Sampling events are critical to help maintain sales growth and increase awareness of our brand, however we are very short of volunteers.

If you are willing to consider attending such an event, and helping your co-op grow, please call me and I will add you to the list of member volunteers. WGBC gives a \$100 gift card to members who support events. Actual event dates will vary, but can often be scheduled around your availability and can be booked individually.

Five new customers joined us in the third Quarter of 2014. The Sujeo and Graze restaurants in Madison, as well as the Nitty Gritty chain of brew pubs made initial orders and are excited about our offering.

In September, we had our 2015 planning meeting with the board of directors. It was a very productive and promising session with a number of new programs to be announced at our annual meeting on February 28, 2014 in WI Dells, so please plan to attend.

Many of our current customers were referred to us by friends or members of the co-op and we need your help to continue to grow. If you know of anyone who would like to enjoy Wisconsin Meadows Brand 100% Grass-fed Beef, please have them contact me at sales@wisconsingrassfed.Co-op or call 608-451-2861.

Rod Ofte – General Manager, WGBC - 800-745-9093

Revised WGBC Protocol

Wisconsin Grass-Fed Beef Cooperative [WGBC] 100% Grass-Fed Beef Production Protocol

The following outlines what the Cooperative focuses our production, processing, and marketing on:

Quality, taste and tenderness

Product consistency – premium, quality “grass-fed” livestock produce a quality product to our customers

Verify animal source - age and production history for livestock products sold by WGBC

Food safety - protocols for hormone and antibiotic use, high processing standards

Environmental Stewardship

Grass-fed health benefits (CLA, Omega 3, leanness, etc.) and humane animal care/treatment

Required Producer and Protocol Documentation:

Farm Records – identifying market animals are born and raised in Wisconsin.

Individual animal ID from birth (tagged and records), or an affidavit affirming age.

Bill of Lading and Signed Affidavit Form – at time of sale to WGBC providing:

Farm Producer Name / Date of Shipment / Delivery Destination

Tag # - Age – Sex - Breed - Description

Ownership Transfer/ Signed Affidavit Form – only when animals purchased as feeders.

Forms are available on WGBC website or upon request. Signed copy duplicates are suggested for farm records.

Breed (this information is for internal cooperative use—to determine over time which breeds, herds perform the best for us).

Members will be subject to third party certification.

Natural and 100% Grass Fed:

Diet: Market animals will be raised and finished on pasture and forages with no grain.

Calves typically should not be weaned prior to 120 days of age. Producers are encouraged to wean later, up to 10 months of age. Access to mother’s milk during winter contributes to higher weight gains of market animals and does not harm the dam.

Pastures will be produced with no synthetic herbicides or pesticides.

Pastures or stored forages can include perennial (cool or warm season) grasses, legumes (alfalfa, clovers, etc.), and broadleaf forages (chicory, trefoil, “palatable weeds”). Pastured or stored forages may include summer and winter annuals such as brassicas, small grains, sorghum, sudan, grazing [leaf only] corn and so on.

Small grain crops need to be grazed/harvested before mature seed develops.

Non-GMO seeds must be planted.

Purchased forages should also meet these protocol requirements.

Any of the above perennial or annual forages may be fed as stored hay, haylage, or silage.

Supplements. Animals may be fed the following supplements:

Mineral and vitamin blocks or mixes (grain or grain byproducts that are used as carrier within the supplement are allowed – PROVIDING they are fed at labeled rates and NOT used as a grain supplement). [source verified - see website]

Kelp

Salt

Molasses (liquid or lick tubs w/minimal grain byproducts) [source verified – see WGBC website]

Flax seed or flax seed meal, grown without synthetic pesticides or herbicides

Prohibited diet supplements, additives or injections:

Grains and oilseeds (with the exception of flax).

Mature corn silage and/or grazed corn stover.

Animal and fish by-products.

Antibiotics and/or hormonal treatments for growth promotion.

Others as determined by WGBC membership or Board of Directors.

WGBC Protocol continued

Pasture management and intake goals:

Access to or intake of fresh pasture/forage requirement: a minimum of 150 days or 30% of total annual dry matter intake.

Grazing will be managed to optimize the health and productivity of the land and the animals. Managed rotational grazing is strongly encouraged.

No routine feedlot or confinement production is allowed.

No synthetic herbicides or pesticides are allowed on perennial or annual pastures.

Animal Health:

No antibiotic or growth hormone use is allowed for slaughter animals sold through the Cooperative's Grass-Fed Beef program.

Organic and natural veterinary treatments are strongly encouraged.

As appropriate veterinary treatments, which may include antibiotics, are suggested to ensure humane treatment of all animals. WGBC will assist finding alternative markets for animals treated with prohibited substances, if requested. WGBC pricing will not apply.

Synthetic chemical wormer and fly treatments are strongly discouraged [for natural and holistic alternatives please consult the WGBC website]. If such treatments are still deemed necessary we request a withholding period of 90 days before slaughter.

All veterinary treatments, vaccines, worming treatments, and antibiotics, must be documented for each animal and dated records available for inspection by WGBC.

Genetics:

Beef Breeds - no dairy breeds/genetics. Animals should be moderate-framed that finish efficiently on forage-based diets are highly recommended (Frame scores 3-5, steers finishing at 1000 to 1200 pounds).

Possible breeds include Devon, Murray Gray, Galloway, and British White Park and may include smaller framed strains of Angus and Hereford. Continental breeds are discouraged.

Animal Handling:

Producers and others are required to use low stress/humane handling practices throughout farm operations, loading, hauling, unloading and slaughter.

Producers are encouraged to educate themselves and attend low stress stock handling classes and apply suggested practices whenever possible.[see WGBC website for resources]

Animal performance:

Members are encouraged to monitor weight gain and achieve a goal of at least 1.25 pounds per day throughout the slaughter animal's lifetime, with an average daily gain of at least 1.5 pounds per day in the finishing period (the last 3-4 months).

No animal >30 months of age will be allowed in the grass-fed marketing program. Cull cows/bulls are exempt.

Slaughter animals are subject to visual inspection for finish by a Co-op member or employee. The Cooperative reserves the right to refuse entry of an animal into the grass-fed marketing program if it is not appropriately finished.

If ultrasound inspection is conducted, finished animals should have at least 0.2 inches of back fat and an ultrasound tenderness score of 2.5 or less.

Member quality statement:

Members will certify with a written affidavit that they have followed the protocols above.

The Cooperative will engage in a peer inspection program through which members will monitor each other for compliance with our standards.

The Cooperative may institute a third party inspection process.

Producer Profile

Kelly Andrew is raising 68 head of Hereford-Angus Cross on his 300-acre farm south of La Farge in Vernon County. Kelly's grandfather bought the main part of the farm in 1919. He moved down from Ontario because he wanted a milking machine and La Farge had electricity. The farm is long and skinny with the Kickapoo River running through the farm for a mile on one side and Otter Creek running through for a mile on the other side and running into the Kickapoo River on the lower end of the farm.

Kelly farmed here back in the 70s when he got out of the Navy and went broke but he's proud of the fact that he paid everybody off and didn't take anybody with him. He took a summer job at Ft McCoy and was there for 28 years. He spent 20 years as a mechanic and then 8 years with a desk job in Quality Assurance. When his father passed away in 2010, Kelly and his brother Tom bought the farm and Kelly retired from Ft McCoy.

Kelly's wife is a city girl. She grew up in Janesville and now works as an emergency nurse at the Sparta and Tomah hospitals where she prefers to work nights. Kelly and his wife have lived in the same house in Sparta for over 30 years. They have four kids. Their oldest son is in Sparta, their oldest daughter is in Madison going to college and in the Army Reserve, their youngest son is in the Navy stationed in Washington and their youngest daughter is in the Air Force stationed in Grand Forks, ND. Kelly makes the trip from Sparta to La Farge 6 days a week.

Kelly is an independent contractor seed salesman for Byron Seeds, an Amish owned company based out of Indiana that specialize in forages. His brother Tom is a truck driver and is home about 1 weekend a month. They have one niece that helps a lot on the farm.

Kelly described reading an article back in the 70s in the Stockman Grass Farmer magazine and being intrigued by the possibility of doing everything on grass. He described how southern cattlemen pasture good land, but in Vernon County they only pasture the land they can't farm. Kelly said the idea of raising cattle on grass was always in the back of his mind in the years he was off the farm. He started rotational grazing and in the dry summer of 2012 he made it through the summer without feeding hay. He has his pastures divided into paddocks, 3 on the heifer farm and 8 on the home farm. In just 3 years of managed grazing, he's seen an improvement in the pastures.



More Grass-fed Beef Producers Needed!!

In order for The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative to maintain its rapid growth, we are announcing a membership drive to increase production of our grass-fed beef supply and gain more producing members.

The membership drive will run for 6 months starting December 1st 2014 and will run until May 31st of 2015.

A member in good standing, can recruit a new producing member. The sponsor member would be eligible for a one-time \$100 gift card (for each member signed) from either Kwik Trip or Gander Mountain.

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. After the new producing member's application and herd genetics have been approved, WGBC will act on procuring & distributing the gift cards.

Membership packets are available @ www.wisconsingrassfed.coop,
www.wisconsinmeadows.com. Or call Pete @ (920) 210 9177

Message from the Board

~SPRING BONUS

With the demand for quality grass-fed beef remaining strong going into the fall season, we want to make sure we will be able to secure enough cattle through the first quarter and into the second quarter of next year. With that, we will be offering an additional \$.10 premium for cattle shipped in January through April of 2015. This is being offered on a first come, first serve basis so contact Pete as soon as possible to get details and firm up your shipping slot.

~MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE

We will be running another Membership Drive this year. We have changed a few things from last year's program but the goal remains the same – to get quality grass-fed beef producers on board with us. We have members from all over the state who know the producers in their areas. You are the best resource for us to identify and recruit members that will help us continue to grow. Additional information outlining this year's program is included in this newsletter.

The board is putting in place a program to pay WGBC members who sell through the co-op a year-end dividend. Remember, you own this Co-operative and our profits will go back to the members, not the sale barn or other corporate entity!

~ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

This year's **Annual Meeting** will be changed up a bit from the past. After 5 years at the Hancock Ag Research Station, we will be moving the meeting to **Wisconsin Dells**. It will be held on **Saturday, February 28, 2015**. Dr Allen Williams, well known speaker, educator, grazier and marketer of forage finished beef will be our guest speaker. This will be an excellent opportunity to hear first-hand the trends and status of the grass-fed beef industry. Mark your calendar. Full details will be communicated in a separate mailing.

~KEEP'N THEM IN THE CO-OP

If you are planning to market your calves this fall, please consider working with members within the Co-op. We need to retain as many calves as possible to meet future demand. Whether you are looking to buy or sell, you can post an ad on our website (for free). We also have all members listed for you to look up and contact directly. If you need assistance getting set up on our website, contact Mandy McGee (see contact info on the back page of this newsletter). For those without internet—Judy Pesz has agreed to help match buyers with sellers. Her number is 608-464-3920.

Thank you for your continued support of YOUR Co-op!



**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.Co-op or

call **1-800-745-9093**

Member assistance:

production@wisconsingrassfed.Co-op

Wholesale sales: sales@wisconsingrassfed.Co-op



MANAGEMENT TEAM-

General Manager

Rod Ofte

E5702 Spring Coulee Rd

Coon Valley, WI 54623

sales@wisconsingrassfed.Co-op

608-451-2861 or **1-800-745-9093**

Production & Membership Coordinator

Pete Prochnow

W1691 Hilltop Lane

Ixonia, WI 53036

prochnow.pete@gmail.com

920-210-9177

Financial Manager

Tracey's Tax Service

Tracey A Hennessey, EA

15 S. Lincoln Street, Suite 3

Elkhorn, WI 53121

tracey@traceystaxservice.com

Office: 262-725-4354

Marketing and Website

Mandy McGee

S2093 Scratch Road

LaFarge, WI 54639

driftlessdells@aol.com

608-489-2162

WGBC Board of Directors & Staff

Board Members

President

Greg Nowicki

R5610 Cty Rd M

Athens, WI 54411

eatgrasfed@gmail.com

715-257-7146

Vice President

Russ Endres

6921 Cty Hwy K

Middleton, WI 53562

rendres@wimci.com

(608)258-2080

Secretary/Treasurer

Lanice Szomi

W5101 Correction Lane

Medford, WI 54451

lszomi@tds.net

715-748-2269

Judy Lang

N4669 CTH Q

Medford, WI 54451

judyblang@tds.net

715-748-3380

Kevin Moore

E4822 Dawn Road

Plain, WI 53577

Kevin@dawnrd.com

608-546-6035

Mel Abel

W4393 Maple Center Road

Greenwood, WI 54437

nlabel55@gmail.com

715-255-8750

Jon Lee

100 Church Street

Coon Valley, WI 54623

jonlee@mwt.net

608-452-3835

New Co-op Number:

1-800-745-9093