

Beef bites:

- The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Coop now has **OVER 100 members. Congratulations!**
- **Mark your calendars – January 12, 2014 is the Annual Meeting at the Hancock Research station. Watch for details in December.**
- WGBC is actively seeking members who produce high quality grass-fed beef according to our protocol requirements. See page 5 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

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Message from your Board of Directors....

Our operations team is continually working with our customer base to insure we are providing them with a product they want and have come to expect from the Wisconsin Meadows brand. With that comes the realization that customer concerns are ever changing. A number of years ago the big draw to our product was (and still is) the health benefits of the CLAs and Omega 3s, the sustainability of our production methods, and the fact that the consumer's dollar was staying "local" supporting family farms. Then, we started to learn that those buying our product favored the humane aspect of our production methods from the non-confinement requirement to the low-stress handling techniques and the delayed weaning of the calves. Now the focus has shifted toward GMOs. Consumers that are educating themselves about the effects of GMOs on our health are trying to eliminate them from their diets.

Fortunately, the original steering committee and Board of Directors that developed our Production Protocol had the foresight to address all of these points early on. Many other Grass-Fed programs do not have as strict a protocol as we do.

We are in the process of modifying our label to highlight these points and help differentiate us from the other products in the meat case. Many customers do make their buying decisions by what they read on the label. We have a good story to tell so we want to take advantage of that.

From a production standpoint, it's up to us, the producers to bring integrity and credibility to what we state on our label and in our literature. Know our protocol. Keep it handy and review it often. Contact us if you have questions or need clarification on any of the requirements or restrictions.

The co-op is a company & brand that you are part owner of – together we can continue to make it a success!



3rd Quarter 2013 – WGBC General Manager's Update

It is a great time to be a member of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative. 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 paying our producers a base price of \$2.35 per lb hanging weight. Year to date, sales are up 17% vs 2012. Some of the most positive news is that we are finally developing a solid inbound cattle supply. This 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. In order to grow brand awareness and direct sales to end consumers, we also attended two farmers markets in Milwaukee. 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. Such events are critical to helping maintain sales growth and increase awareness of our brand, however we are very short of volunteers. 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. Actual events dates will vary, but can often be scheduled around your availability and can be booked individually.

Two new customers joined us in the third Quarter of 2014. Bobby Rockets of Lyons, WI and the Essential Café in Elkhorn made initial orders and are excited about our offering.

In September, we had our 2014 planning meeting with the board of directors. It was a very productive and promising session with a number of new programs to be implemented on or around our annual meeting in January 2014, 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.coop or call 608-451-2861.

Rod Ofte – General Manager, WGBC

Producer Profile

Jim Munsch is the owner of Deer Run Farm, a farm with spectacular views on the ridge tops above Coon Valley in northern Vernon County. Jim owns 100 acres but only 50 acres are usable for grazing or crops. He rents another 50 acres. Jim said he used to rent another 50 acres but lost it to a grain guy and



because of that he has had to cut back on the number of cattle he has. Jim said this is a year of transition. Until last year he was selling feeders and finished cattle as organic grass-fed through a large vegetable CSA. It was a very inflexible system because he had to be organic which kept him off the hay market and limited where he could get land. Since joining the Wisconsin Grass Fed Beef Coop, he doesn't plan on managing his farm any different but stepping away from the organic market gives him options.

Jim grew up on a hog farm in Indiana where his only experience with cattle was a half-dozen milking Shorthorns. He graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Agriculture and Business. Following service in the Army, he went on to work in the business world in general and marketing management. In addition to his work on Deer Run Farm he is a frequent speaker at farm conferences on the pricing and production costs related to the grass-fed business. In cooperation with the UW Madison, Jim developed Veggie Compass, an online tool use by fresh market vegetable growers to improve profitability by better understanding cost of production by crop. Jim has written several articles for Graze magazine on the production

costs of grass fed beef.

Jim has a herd of 30 registered Angus cows with a mix of spring calves and fall calves. Jim moves his cattle every day. He has 40 acres that he divides into 30 paddocks of about an acre and a quarter or what he thinks they can eat in 24 hours. Jim said a lot of beef people push back hard on moving cattle every day but he said it gets your stock density up and makes much more uniform grazing. His fields have very few weeds and very little tall grass. The cattle tend to eat everything. The cows are more docile because you are around them and handling them every day. For water, he uses largest stock tank he could find at the highest point on the farm and he put in 4,000 feet of $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 1" black plastic pipe to gravity feed water to the rest of the paddock. Jim said he used to water around the building but he ended up with ditchy lanes and all the nutrients ended up around the buildings. Nutrient management and animal performance is greatly improved. He is on a ridge with very little natural protection so for winter he has built two barns and he beds very heavy so the animals never get dirty. He composts the bedding and then spreads it on his hay fields.

Jim said he has "been in the cattle business a long time and it took us a long time to figure out how to make money at it. And grazing is one way because grazing lowered our costs dramatically from what we were doing before. Rotational grazing. Effective managed grazing." When he purchased his farm back in the late '70s, his entire farm was cropland. He said "One of the cost effective things I learned is that not to get all excited about plowing these fields up and planting them all the time." He said his pastures have not been tilled in 25 years. When he purchased the farm, the organic matter in his fields was between 1.5% and 2%. Fast-forward 25 years and the organic matter is 3.5% approaching 4%. His pastures are a mix of red and white clover, alfalfa from when they were hay fields, a mix of legumes that he encourages because they are his nitrogen and naturally occurring meadow fescue.

Jim and Phylis have worked with the Mississippi Valley conservancy to put an easement on their farm to keep it a farm forever.

-by Kevin Moore, WGBC Board Member

Production Update—Pete Prochnow

Hello Producer/Members,

As we face the final quarter of 2013 familiar issues are on our minds. How many animals can we keep around as grazing options diminish? Pasture conditions, forage stored and/or prices, cash flow needs, etc., all impact critical decisions for our livestock farming operations.

Decisions made for our farm business – directly impact your cooperative’s success as well! Cattle availability and purchase prices are critical, but also carcass utilization, processing and operational expenses - must all be met with continuous profitable sales opportunities?

It is a delicate balance. To date, member’s efforts are delivering great results, again. Despite a late cool wet – then dry - grazing season resulting in spotty pasture/harvested forage yields, our beef animal’s carcass quality and size continue to be very good. Fortunately, WGBC marketing has been able to continue providing steady sales revenue enabling premium livestock prices.

So, what’s ahead?

The average price/lb WGBC paid for cattle this year crept up when including forward scheduling contract incentives and livestock hauling cost assistance, yet end product pricing remains mostly unchanged – can this continue? We hear echoes of a regional grass finished cattle oversupply recently – is it seasonal? Will market demand keep pace with grass fed beef supplies? How can conventional markets continue supporting strong stocker prices and softening long term fat cattle prices – at the same time? Perhaps more questions than answers.

Let me know your answers, **AND cattle marketing plans for 2014. Expected shipping weeks are shown below.** Remember, WGBC is focusing on and working hard toward continuing to provide member/producers a consistent and sustainable livestock marketing option for quality local pasture/forage finished cattle. We’re in this together and will help each other succeed.

January 5	April 13	July 6	October 12
January 19	April 27	July 20	October 26
February 2	May 11	August 3	November 9
February 16	May 25	August 17	November 23
March 2	June 8	August 31	December 7
March 16	June 22	September 14	December 21
March 30		September 28	

As the famous baseball player Yogi Berra **may** have said “It’s not over, until the fat cow swings”.

Pete Prochnow 920-210-9177 or pete@wisconsingrassfed.coop Thank you.

Membership Drive Initiative

The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Coop 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 1st of 2013 and running until April 30th of 2014.

From November 1st of 2013 through April 30th 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 31st of 2014.

The new member/s application must be accepted/recorded within the November 1st 2013 window and up until April 30th 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.

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!!



WI Grass-fed Beef Co-op Branded Clothing available -

Mens: Long sleeve, button down, Yellow 2 -XLs

Ladies: Long Sleeve, button down, Yellow
2- Smalls, 2 - Mediums, 1 - XL

Unisex Blue Fleece: 3 - Large, 2 -XLs

All items and sizes are available via special order.
Don't see your size? Contact Rod Ofte if interested
at 608-451-2861.



Feed Supply

As fall is upon us, and feed supplies are short again this year, we always get questions about feeding/grazing corn stalks. This is prohibited for any cattle that will be entering our program. However, you can put your brood cows out on the corn stubble after the calves have been weaned. Keep in mind that those cows would no longer be eligible to enter the program as culls.

Also, when purchasing hay, be aware that Round-up Ready (GMO) Alfalfa is out there. Even though most of us would prefer not buy alfalfa anyway, in some areas alfalfa or alfalfa/grass mix hay may be all that is available. Know your source.



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

Member assistance:

production@wisconsingrassfed.coop

Wholesale sales: sales@wisconsingrassfed.coop



MANAGEMENT TEAM-

General Manager

Rod Ofte

E5702 Spring Coulee Rd

Coon Valley, WI 54623

sales@wisconsingrassfed.coop
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