

wisconsin grass-fed beef cooperative

WISCONSIN  
MEADOWS™

100% Grass-fed Beef

# Meadow View

Volume 10, Issue 1 • January, 2019

## Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-op: Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Wintergreen Resort & Conference Center** 100 Gasser Road, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965  
(same location as last year) From I-90/94, take Hwy. 12 – exit 92 (by Great Wolf and Kalihari)  
and go north on Hwy. 12 to first stoplight, then left (west) on Gasser Road.

**Members, please RSVP to Mandy by January 15<sup>th</sup> (or ASAP) at 608-489-2162 or e-mail:**  
**more.info@wisconsingrassfed.coop** (read more about the meeting inside)

### Here's the winter edition of our Meadow View newsletter!

This 1st issue of the year is mailed to everyone in the co-op so you get the info on the annual meeting. Then you should receive a shorter electronic version by e-mail quarterly.

Help save your co-op some money! If you have been getting the quarterly newsletters in the mail, and can provide us with your e-mail address, we can save on how many printed copies have to go out, and you will get additional monthly updates from the management team on cattle and pricing topics, as well as the newsletter. *Please ensure we have your current e-mail address.*

Member participation in a cooperative is vital! We welcome your feedback or questions, as well as contributions of articles, recipes or photos, upcoming grazing events or news from your part of the state.

To contact someone at the co-op, our e-mail address is:  
**more.info@wisconsingrassfed.coop** or  
mail to: **Box 269 Viroqua, WI 54665.**

We'll be sure to direct it to the appropriate staff or board member.

### President's Message

I hope everyone is settled into their winter routine. November was harsh, wet and cold and December, at least where I live, was much better. It's been a very productive fall for our co-op. When our board met with the management staff at our annual planning day in September we agreed to proceed on our pork trial. At our December board meeting we approved our 2019 operating budget which includes pork sales! The trial was off to a good start and we have do-able goals from the Pork side for the coming year. As always there will be unexpected issues crop up when you try a new venture however we are going slowly and we have much more experience now versus ten years ago when the co-op started. Our beef sales are still growing and are projected to grow further in 2019. We will give a full update at our annual meeting in the Dells on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Speaking of the annual meeting we have speakers coming in as well as a producer panel. The producer panels have been very popular with our members as well as informative – they lead to many great discussions after the formal conference is over and the social hour begins! This year we are looking for a new board member as Bob Pesz is not seeking another term. I want to thank Bob for his insights over the last three years on the board. You may have seen Bob roll in on his motorcycle to a pasture walk in the past – and certainly when you see Bob, thank him for his service!

So, what are the duties of a board member you may ask? To help with this we have a WGBC Board responsibility list. The highlights are:

- support and be an advocate for our co-op .
- become familiar with our *goals and strategic plan* as well as our bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- attend our September strategic meeting as well as our annual meeting.
- volunteer for committee assignments, occasionally represent WGBC at events such as store demos, Grassworks, Burgers and Brew, etc.
- lastly – read materials in advance and attend via conference call, our monthly meetings which are held on Monday evenings from about 7 to 9 pm.

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# wisconsin grass-fed beef cooperative

## Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative – 2019 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

February 9, 2019 – Wintergreen Resort and Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

- 9:00 am WGBC Annual Meeting registration – members only  
(snacks, coffee and water to be served)
- 9:30 am Call to order – Welcome, member introductions, additions/corrections to the agenda\*
- 9:45 am Reading and Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes
- 10:00 am Treasurer's Report / Handout – AR, AP, Payment Terms, Balance Sheet Summary  
Reading Pay Stubs
- 10:15 am 2018 Business Summary and 2019 Outlook  
• Pastured Pork update
- 11:00 AM Break – guests can join at this time for educational programs and lunch\*\*
- 11:15 am Guest Speaker: Ron Russell – UW-Madison  
*“Understanding the importance of carcass quality and its impact on yield. Why does it matter?”*
- Noon Board member nominations and election –  
two seats open (only member farms may vote)
- 12:15 pm Lunch – Move to dining room
- 1:15 pm Reconvene – Election results announced
- 1:15 pm WGBC Producer Panel discussing successful grass-fed  
finishing: Casey Kerstiens, Roman Miller, Greg Nowicki
- 2:15 pm Break – networking and visiting with our sponsors
- 2:45 pm Member Awards and Recognition
- 3:15 pm QLF – New Sponsor Spotlight Presentation – Trial Results
- 3:45 pm Closing remarks / Questions / Discussion
- 4:00 pm New board meets, election of officers and picture new business as needed
- 4:00–7:00 pm Social time with buffet

Our featured speaker, Ron Russell is a senior lecturer in the Meat Science Dept. at the UW – Madison. A nationally recognized carcass judge, he has coached the collegiate meats judging team and teaches everything from pasture to plate!

\* *Submit requests for additions to this agenda to co-op secretary Greg Nowicki 715-257-7146, or make a motion from the floor at the call to order.*

\*\* *The educational program is open to all – invite other graziers/potential members!*

Special room rates available under WGBC block @ \$89/night until Jan 20th, 2019. Call 1-800-648-4765 and press #1 for reservations; say “Wisconsin – Grass-fed Co-op” (rates climb to \$119 after Jan 21st.)





## Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative – 2018 Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Held at the Wintergreen Resort, Wisconsin Dells on Sat. Feb. 10, 2018; submitted by Tim Mathison

**Introduction** – Russ Endres, board president called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

President Endres introduced the members of the Board of Directors and the Management Team. There were over 70 co-op members in attendance who introduced themselves.

**Approve 2017 Annual Meeting Minutes** – Greg Nowicki, Secretary provided the minutes from the 2017 Annual Meeting in a written newsletter sent to all members in January. Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes. MC

**Treasurer's Report** – Tim Mathison, the Co-op's accountant gave an overview of the 2017 financials. Co-op had profit of \$18,335 on sales of over \$1.6 million in 2017.

**2017 Overview- Rod Ofte** – General Manager, presented a summary and highlights of the first 10 years of the Co-op. These include, going from shipping 1–2 head per cycle to 15–20 head per week, and pushing toward \$2 million in annual sales. Also factoring in were the new branded van, our product launch in the greater Chicagoland area, the new 30# mixed box, and the improved tier pricing payments to producers.

2017 also had several challenges including lack of supply of consistent cattle, increasing competition, USDA and distributor challenges, multi destination processors, and lower than desired number of participants for leads, referrals, and demos.

The Board of Directors approved a Patronage Dividend for the 63 producers who shipped cattle to the Co-op in 2017. The total dividend is 30% of the net profit of \$18335, which is \$5500.55. The dividend checks were sent out in January and February 2018. Written copies of the 2017 P&L results were made available to all producers.

**2018 Outlook and Business Approach** – For 2018, the Co-op is looking to continue increasing the quality of cattle. Continued stable growth of 10% is forecast. Focus will be on growing our farm to table business and continuing our expansion into the Chicago markets. We will also be looking at a trial protein expansion into the pastured pork market.

**Tiered Pricing Update** – The importance of shipping properly finished cattle was reinforced because our customers pay a premium for high quality, consistent product. Low quality carcasses have less value to the Co-op and will be priced accordingly. Food businesses operate on paying different prices for different grades of product. The key to take away is if the producer doesn't know if the animal is

finished, they should not ship it. Effective February 1, 2018 producers will be paid on a five-tier pricing structure.

**Awards** – Pete Prochnow presented the Producer of the Year Award to Vince Hundt, and the Member of the Year Award to Bill and Laura Paine.

**Annual Meeting Sponsors** – Rod thanked Lorentz Meats, WI Farmers Union, Compeer Financial, and Great Lakes Alfalfa for sponsoring the annual meeting. Great Lakes Alfalfa gave a short presentation of their products in the afternoon session.

**Board Member Nominations and Election Results** – Two seats were open for election. Kevin Moore chose not to run for another term. Nominees were current board member Gene Schreifer, past board member Mel Abel, and Brett Danke from Kolbe & Kolbe Farms. The results of the election had Gene Schreifer being re-elected and Brett Danke was the winner of the other seat.

**Educational Session** – A WGBC Producer Panel led a discussion on "Secrets to Successful Grass-fed Finishing". Members of the panel were Laura Paine, Vince Hundt, Greg Nowicki, and Jacob Marty. It was a great discussion with lots of questions from the producers in attendance.

Jim Munsch, a WGBC producer, gave a presentation entitled "Understanding the numbers: key financials to successful grass-fed beef operations".

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. It was followed by happy hour and food prepared by Wintergreen Resort with our beef.

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### *President's Message, continued from page 1*

So if you are up for the challenge, I encourage you to think about running for a board seat! Yes there is some work to it, however I can say it's very rewarding and you can learn a great deal in the process as no one comes on the board knowing how to run the business, we learn and each has differing prospective to offer .

Please mark your calendar and attend our annual conference. Our members who attend are always happy they did! See you in February at Wintergreen!!

**Russ Endres –  
WGBC Board President**

## Pricing and Production Notes

**New Wisconsin Meadows Pastured Pork:** As our relationships have grown with existing customers, we have been asked if we could provide other types of local protein products over the years. We have done trials in veal and lamb previously but given that pork is a significant part of the protein offering in the U.S., local pork offerings are limited and about a third of our members currently raise pork, we conducted a small scale trial with a number of customers in 2018.

Our protocol is very simple and straightforward with no gimmicks. The pigs must be farrowed without crates and humanely treated (no ear notching or cutting of tails). They *can* be fed non-GMO corn, and maintain the natural omnivorous diet that hogs will pursue. They must also have plenty of space to roam and access to the outdoors and fresh water 24/7/365 just like our cattle.

Our current market price is \$1.50/lb hanging weight, and will probably go up slightly once the segment financials solidify. If you are interested in selling pork the cooperative, please contact Rod @ 608-451-2861.

**Patronage Bonus change for 2019:** Two years ago the WGBC board of directors voted to pay a Producer/Patron Bonus of 10¢ per pound hanging weight to those farms shipping more than 12 animals

in the calendar year – that is, the 13th animal to unlimited – for that year. The objective was to encourage member farms with more production capacity to ramp up and also to reward loyalty to our cooperative.

The data collected to evaluate this action recently became available, and in response, your board moved to adjust the guidelines of the Producer/Patron Bonus – increasing the threshold to 16 head shipped in a calendar year. Additionally, cull cows will no longer be included in the “count” of animals shipped within the calendar year – so only fat animals (starting with the 17th) will receive the 10 cent bonus per pound.

We appreciate the tolerance and understanding of our members who market their animals with WGBC as we constantly strive to make the co-op profitable for all!

### *Get Involved in Your Co-op!*

There are two seats up for election on the board of directors in 2019. Members interested in running for a three-year term *please notify secretary Greg Nowicki by February 3rd to be included on the ballot.* (715-257-7146 or e-mail: [eatgrasfed@gmail.com](mailto:eatgrasfed@gmail.com)) Nominations (yourself or others) will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

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