

wisconsin grass-fed beef cooperative

WISCONSIN
MEADOWS™

100% Grass-fed Beef

Meadow View

Volume 13, Issue 1 • January, 2022

Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Co-op: Saturday, February 12th, 2022

*Our annual meeting will be in person this year,
see page 2 for agenda and details.*

A block of rooms will be held until Jan. 23rd at \$89 + tax, call 1-800-648-4765.

*Thank you to this year's sponsors: Lorentz Meats, Johnson's Sausage Shoppe, Nordik Meats,
Wisconsin Farmers Union, Compeer Financial, Byron Seeds, QLF, and USDA WEDC*

The new year's edition of our Meadow View newsletter is here.

The first issue of the year is mailed to all co-op members so everyone gets the info on the annual meeting. Then you should receive a shorter electronic version by e-mail quarterly, as well as monthly messages from the management team. Let us know if you are not receiving those communications, so we can update your info and keep you up-to-date!

Included in this mailing is our shipping form/bill of lading. It is imperative that members shipping cattle this year send the form in with their cattle.

We always 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.

Message from the Board President

What a year it has been! We have decided to have our annual cooperative member meeting in the Dells this year on February 12th. I look forward to this event every year and certainly this year is no different!

As always, the cooperative has had a very busy year! We were fortunate to be awarded a substantial USDA Value-Added Producer Grant to use to expand the co-op's business. The management team and the board met this fall, in September, for our annual in-person board meeting. The grant opportunity gave a lot to discuss and plan.

This year we hired our first full-time employee, Anders Unseth, who started just after last year's virtual annual meeting. Anders has worked on livestock procurement and launched our business-to-consumer channel – working to sell directly to consumers. He and Angie Lindloff, our webmaster, developed packages to be marketed on our website and other social media. For instance, they marketed a grill package and a holiday box in addition to the 30-lb. boxes we have been doing for some time. We continue to learn during this process and are encouraged at the amount of customers who reorder!

General Manager Rod Ofte is working to develop additional customers and also new products such as our landjaeger and summer sausage.

We have a very full agenda at this year's annual meeting with great speakers and sponsors! There is also time for some food and refreshments which will be a great atmosphere to do a little visiting with fellow co-op members. I look forward to seeing you there!

Russ Endres – WGBC Board President

Get Involved in the Operation of Your Co-op!

There are two seats up for election on the board of directors in 2022. Any members interested in running for a three-year term **notify secretary Greg Nowicki by February 1st to be included on the ballot.** (715-573-5610 or e-mail: eatgrasfed@gmail.com)

Nominations (yourself or others) will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

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Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative – 2022 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

February 12th, 2022 Clarion Hotel & Suites and Wintergreen Conference Center

- 9:30 – 10:00 am WGBC Annual Meeting Registration
- 10:00 am Call to order – Welcome, Member Introductions & Acknowledge Sponsors
Additions / Corrections to the agenda
- 10:15 am Reading and Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes (see page 3)
- 10:45 am Guest Speaker: Serge Koenig (*Animal-friendly Handling and Corral Systems*)
- 11:30 am Board Member Nominations, Introductions and Election
- 11:45 am Lunch – Please visit our sponsors and network with the membership
New board meets in main room before lunch, and elects 2022 officers
- 12:45 – 1:15 pm Main Sponsor Presentation (*Co-op Solar Group Buy Program*)
Nick Hylla, Midwest Renewable Energy Association & WEDC
- 1:15 – 1:45 pm 2021 Business Summary and 2022 Outlook
Cattle ID Policy Update and Review
- 1:45 – 2:15 pm Social Media 2021 Update – Marketing Plan 2022
- 2:15 – 2:45 pm Break – Networking with our sponsors and members
- 2:45 - 3:15 pm 2021 Business-to-Consumer Results and 2022 Plans
- 3:15 – 3:30 pm WGBC Awards Presentation:
The Jon Lee WGBC Member of the Year Award
The 2021 WGBC Service Award
- 3:30 – 4:00 pm Gene Schriefer – Wisconsin FSA Executive Director
- 4:00 pm Final Q & A; Adjournment
Happy hour social in the
Wintergreen bar.
Complimentary food and
beverages provided.

Be sure to turn in your meeting evaluation afterwards for a tasty Wisconsin Meadows product to take home!



2021 Financial Statements

WGBC members not in attendance but wishing to get the 2021 Profit and Loss Statement, can email: accounting@wisconsingrassfed.coop to request it.

We will also go over it at the annual meeting.

To request by mail, please send a note to:

Tim Mathison WGBC Accountant

P.O. Box 269, Viroqua, WI 54665

608-634-2862 | Accounting@wisconsingrassfed.coop



Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative – 2021 Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Held virtually on Zoom, Sat. Feb. 20, 2021; submitted by Tim Mathison

Introduction – President Russ Endres called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Rod Ofte introduced the members of the Board of Directors and the Management Team that joined the meeting at Russ' office in Madison. The other members of the board and management team joined the meeting via Zoom along with over 20 members.

Approve 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes – Greg Nowicki, Secretary provided the minutes from the 2020 Annual Meeting in a written newsletter sent to all members in January. Motion by Judy Lang to approve the minutes, second by Laura Paine. MC

2020 Summary – Rod Ofte, General Manager, presented a summary and highlights of 2020. He began by reiterating the new requirement at Lorentz that all cattle are properly tagged. He highlighted the events that were attended before Covid. We are slaughtering an average of 5 hogs every other week. The pastured pork program was especially hard hit by Covid.

2020 had a 16% increase in sales over 2019. 2020 sales were \$2.567 million for beef and \$74,247 for pork, which were new records for the Co-op. Net profit was \$66,694 which is also a record.

There were several things that led to the record sales and profit. These include the Covid buying surge, including a huge increase in the sales of 30 lb. boxes, a \$250,000 food bank contract with DATCP, and the introduction of our Summer Sausage and Landjaeger. With the record sales and profit, the Co-op was able to pay off all outstanding debt, give the members who shipped in 2020 at \$20,000 patronage dividend, and do a smart "prepay" on a number of 2021 items that lowered the 2020 income taxes.

There were also a number of challenges in 2020. They include a wildly fluctuating conventional beef market, a continued lack of consistent supply and grade of cattle, processor date and quota changes, a second major product hold at Johnson's, and the food service sector being decimated by the Covid outbreak.

Outlook – Rod Ofte, General Manager, gave a brief outlook of the Co-op going into 2021. The focus will be on continuing to improve the quality and stability of our live animal pipeline, the online expansion of 30 lb. box ordering, expanding the retail ready cuts, reestablishing the pork program, and the launch of our new dog bone products. An overview of the management team and their duties was presented so members get to know them, and where to go if they have questions or concerns on a topic. Rod introduced Anders Unseth, who will start March 1st as a full-time Co-op employee. His duties are split between being the Business to Consumer Manager overseeing the box online shipping, and Procurement Manager, which he will be taking over from Pete Prochnow.

2021 Business Approach – For 2021, the Co-op is looking for a 1% growth in sales with estimated profit of \$35,000. The growth drivers will be the box online ordering, having a full year of Landjaeger and Summer Sausage sales, and the launch of the dog bones.

Rod gave an update on the USDA Value Added Producer Grant that the Co-op is in the process of submitting the application to receive. The deadline to apply is March 31st. It will be awarded by July 31st with a September 1st start date. It is a \$250,000 grant to increase our scalable marketing capabilities.

Rod reported that scrap expense will no longer be in the P&L in 2021 going forward. The change was started mid 2020 and the BOD was given both versions until the end of 2020.

Website and Social Media – Angie Lindloff gave an update on the websites and social media. The WGBC website has been revamped with a fresh look and no login required. The WI Meadows website was also revamped with a fresh look and new content. She also has incorporated the online shipping platform to streamline the ordering and shipping of our 30# boxes. She reported that our social media followers continue to grow and provided analytics of the websites and social media.

30# Boxes – Brett Danke showed the shipping box with a high R value insulation made of paper that is fully recyclable. Rod reported that the 30# beef boxes are being built and shipped from Nordik Meats now. They are federally inspected so they can be shipped anywhere. Since our pork is processed at Johnson's and they are only state inspected, the pork boxes can only be shipped within Wisconsin. We have set up an account with Spee-Dee to do the shipping at \$16.50 per box. They will pickup Tuesday and Thursday at Nordik. With the new shipping platform, the orders will come in to Anders. The boxes will be ready to go, so he will only have to put the shipping label on the box to get it ready for shipping.

After Covid hit, the price of the 30# boxes was raised from \$199 to \$229 to \$249 within a few weeks due to overwhelming demand for them. We will leave the price at \$249 to allow for Angie to run monthly specials.

Board Member Nominations and Election Results – Two seats were open for election. Brett Danke agreed to run again, and Gene Schriefer elected not to run again. Judy Fossen had agreed to run and was introduced in the January newsletter. Greg Nowicki ran the election and called for nominations from the floor three times. There were none so there was a motion and second to cast a unanimous ballot. MC. Brett and Judy then took a few minutes to introduce themselves. Russ thanked Gene for his six years of service.

Adjournment – Motion by Darren Yanke, second by Dan Wiederholt to adjourn. MC. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Cattle for Sale

*To have an ad included in the spring issue,
please send information and/or photos by March 15th*

Herd Reduction

20 bred cows available, Red Angus X Gelbvieh bred back to Red Angus. Polled, calm, used to electric fencing.

Gene Schriefer: 608-987-4337 or sheepfarm@charter.net

Remember animal ID tags and form when shipping!

All cattle shipped for processing must be identified with an ear tag or back tag that allows haulers and processors to easily trace ownership and connect to your shipping form in order to maintain our 100% grass-fed claims (and to pay you promptly!) The form is included in this mailing, or can be downloaded from the WGBC website: www.wisconsingrassfed.coop

USDA and WI regulations require meat plants to document individual animals, processing plants like Lorentz Meats can reject shipments if our signed shipping form is not available at receiving.

Upcoming Events

30th GrassWorks Grazing Conference

January 20-22, 2022 – Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells

Register through GrassWorks at:

<https://grassworks.org/events/grazing-conference/>

Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farming Conference

Feb 24 – 26, 2022 – LaCrosse

The MOSES Conference brings together all kinds of farmers and ag professionals to learn the latest organic production methods and build a supportive community of resilient organic and sustainable farms. <https://mosesorganic.org/conference/>

Member Opportunity to Attend GrassWorks!

WGBC is again donating meat and having a booth. We are looking for a member to help the management team staff the booth in return for your conference attendance.

Greet attendees and share info about our co-op and grazing with other farmers who may want to join us.

Call or text Rod Ofte's cell to volunteer or for more info: 608-451-2861

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