



WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF COOPERATIVE MEADOW VIEW NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2023

WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING

WHEN: February 11, 2023 • **WHERE:** Wintergreen Conference Center

Clarion Hotel & Suites and Wintergreen Conference Center, 60 Gasser Road, Lake Delton, 53940
A block of rooms will be held until January 20, 2023 at \$89 plus tax. Call 1-800-648-4765 for reservations.

TIME: 9:30 - 10:00 am Registration (See page 3 for the full agenda.)



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT, BRETT DANKE

After a well-balanced summer of sun and rain, I'm hopeful everyone's hay storage is full for the winter season!

The WGBC has been busy this year with continued success as we round the bend of a post-pandemic era. The supply and quality of cattle remains strong as well as the demand from our

distributors, retailers, and direct shipment customers.

As the cooperative enters its 15th year of business, the management team and the board of directors have been busy planning for the future. We recently held two strategic planning sessions with the Food Finance Institute, led in part by Tera Johnson, a familiar name to the cooperative as we drew from her resources three years ago when we launched the Value-Added Food Grant and the

B2C initiative of 30-pound box deliveries to the upper Midwest.

The BOD went through exercises that included: a financial and operational review of the cooperative as it compares to other similar for-profit businesses and a SWOT analysis that allowed us to identify some of our internal Strengths and Weaknesses as well as the external Opportunities and Threats. We

concluded the session with a competitive analysis as well as some homework items for both the BOD and the Food Finance Institute.

Please join us at our annual members meeting in February to learn more about these plans, and enjoy a full day of great speakers, food, refreshments, and general fellowship with other cooperative members!



Photos are from WGBC farms (L to R):
St. Brigid's Meadows (Vince Hundt),
Lee Farmstead (Jon Lee),
Deer Run Farm (Jim Munsch),
Bill's Belted Galloways (Tim Mathison)
©Emma Lee Photography

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

During the annual meeting, we will be conducting an election for the 2023 Board of Directors. There are three seats up for election, with two current board members re-running. Nominations from members are now being accepted and will also be accepted from the floor the day of the meeting. For more information or if interested in becoming a board member, please contact Greg Nowicki at eatgrasfed@gmail.com or 715-573-5610.



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, ROD OFTE

It is a great time to be a member of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative (WGBC). Improved distribution, strong sales and consistent profitability have allowed us to pay all-time record prices, returning solid premiums to our producer members. For the first time in our history, we will pass the \$3,000,000 mark in sales. Our gross pay price, including shipping credits and patronage, will be nearly \$2.80 per lb. hanging weight for finished beef animals as we start 2023. Beef sales are up 16% vs the same period in 2021. Pork sales are up 26% vs the same period in 2021. Our cattle and hog pipeline has strengthened, giving us confidence that we can supply new opportunities and continue growth into 2023. Our strong relationship with Wisconsin food bank organizers proved a key factor in our 2022 success. Feedback from our products supporting food bank efforts in 2020 were very positive. The 2022 food bank initiatives, supported with Federal

government dollars, had requirements that monthly “Badger Box” products must be produced in Wisconsin. That gave us a unique advantage. Most mom-and-pop farmers in The Dairy State can’t put together 14,000 pieces of one item with a 60-day notice. Our producer cooperative of nearly 250 sustainable Wisconsin family farms has that capability. That advantage gained our cooperative nearly \$500,000 in profitable sales in 2022. In addition to our successes on the sales front, we also paused to donate in other ways to those in need. In October 2022, WGBC donated a pallet of beef and pork items, valuing nearly \$5,000 to the Wafer Food Bank to support fellow Wisconsinites. We will continue to be a main sponsor of the GrassWorks Conference in 2023. For the first time, the WGBC has donated two attendance packages to the conference to interested co-op members in order to support “Producer Education”. We also have a booth at the conference promoting membership as well as a number of producers presenting at different times. Lastly, but equally significant, the WGBC

was awarded a \$250,000 value-added producer grant (VAPG) to grow our B2C (Business to Consumer) channel. With the efforts of the Channel Manager, Josh Miner, and grant support, direct sales to consumers will have grown by nearly 70% in 2022. The business outlook for 2023 continues to be very positive. We have a significant part of our grant funds remaining to continue driving our B2C growth. Our refreshed, retail ready Pastured Pork line (see page 5) is ready to launch. We have strong promotion plans with our key accounts that will be supported by in-store product sampling again for the first time since COVID. We plan to attend trade shows and promotional events in person in 2023 for the first time in years. The WGBC has hired Tera Johnson and the Food Finance institute to help guide our plans and team structure into 2027. Please attend the annual meeting where Tera will give an update on those ideas. A sincere thank you to all the producers who delivered finished cattle and hogs to the cooperative this year. Your dedication to your cooperative is what keeps us in business.

LIVESTOCK BEEF CATTLE PRICES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023

Please review the prices and tier system noted below. WGBC revised the tier pricing structure in early 2021 to include more cattle enabling a higher average price per member farm shipment.

| PRICE | TIER | USDA GRADE | MARBLING SCORE |
|------------|----------|------------|--|
| \$2.50/lb. | Tier 1 | Select | 40 - 90 |
| \$2.40/lb. | Tier 2 | Select | 0 - 30 |
| \$2.20/lb. | Tier 3 | Standard | 70 - 90 |
| \$1.55/lb. | Tier 4 | Standard | < 70 AND Culls & Bulls when requested to be shipped |
| \$2.60/lb. | CG Bonus | Choice | > 0 \$0.10/lb. Quality Bonus for Choice carcass grades |

Veal Calves \$3.00/lb. (limited offers)

Volume Commitment Bonus I (after > 10 head beef fat animals are shipped / farm - \$0.05/lb. HWT will be added to producer pay price for Tiers 1 – 3 and Choice Grade animals.

Volume Commitment Bonus II (after > 30 head beef fat animals are shipped / farm - \$0.10/lb. HWT will be added to producer pay price for Tiers 1 – 3 and Choice Grade animals.

All animals are required to have proper identification and listed individually on the affidavit when shipping.

Any questions, please contact the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative at 1-800-745-9093 or email josh@wisconsingrassfed.coop.

BUSINESS TO CONSUMER 2022 SALES HIGHLIGHTS

Join us at the annual meeting to hear about the exciting and profitable year for the cooperative. Below are just a few highlights that we will expand upon at the annual meeting on February 11, 2023.

- ONLINE ORDERS: ▲ 102%
- ONLINE SALES: ▲ 110%
- BOXES/ITEMS: ▲ 97%
- WHOLE BEEF CUSTOM ORDERS: ▲ 74%
- WHOLE HOG CUSTOM ORDERS: ▲ 43%
- ONLINE & CUSTOM SALES: ▲ 74%
- TOTAL ORDERS: 60% are Returning Customers, 40% are New Customers
- CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS:
Overall Product Review is 4.9 out of 5

*As Compared to 2021

WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

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A block of rooms will be held until January 20, 2023 at \$89 plus tax. Call 1-800-648-4765 for reservations.

TIME: 9:30 - 10:00 am Registration

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 9:30 – 10:00 am | WGBC Annual Meeting Registration |
| 10:00 am | Call to Order and Welcome - Member, Guests and Sponsor Introductions - Additions or Corrections to the Agenda |
| 10:15 am | Reading and Approval of 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes |
| 10:30 am | Guest Speaker: Jason Cavadini, State Grazing Specialist |
| 11:30 am | Election: Board Member Nominations, Introductions and Vote |
| 11:45 am | Lunch - New board member meeting and election of officers - Please visit our sponsors and network with the members |
| 12:45 – 1:15 pm | Strategic Planning Update |
| 1:15 – 1:45 pm | 2022 Business Summary and 2023 Outlook - Cattle ID Policy Update Review |
| 1:45 – 2:15 pm | 2022 Social Media Review and 2023 Marketing Plan |
| 2:15 – 2:45 pm | Break: Networking with our Sponsors, Members and Guests |
| 2:45 – 3:15 pm | 2022 B2C Results and 2023 B2C Plan |
| 3:15 – 3:30 pm | WGBC Awards Presentation - The 2022 “Jon Lee” Award (WGBC Member of the Year) - The 2022 WGBC Service Award |
| 3:30 – 4:00 pm | Guest Speaker: Randy Jackson, UW Professor - Grassland 2.0, Restoration Grazing’s role in the future of Agriculture |
| 4:00 pm | Final Q & A & Adjournment |

RECEIVE A TASTY TREAT!

Turn your survey into the registration desk for a tasty Wisconsin Meadows product!

Following the annual meeting, all are welcome to a social hour with complimentary food and beverages located at the Wintergreen Bar.

WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF COOPERATIVE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Held at Wintergreen Conference Center on February 12th, 2022

Introduction: President Russ Endres called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Rod Ofte introduced the members of the Board of Directors and the Management Team. There were 43 members from 29 farms in attendance. Each farm gave a brief introduction of themselves.

Approve 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes: Greg Nowicki, Secretary provided the minutes from the 2021 Annual Meeting in a written newsletter sent to all members in January. Motion by Judy Lang to approve the minutes, second by Bob Pesz. MC

Guest Speaker: Serge Koenig gave a presentation on grazing along with animal friendly handling and corral systems.

Board Member Nominations and Election Results: Two seats were open for election. Charlotte Doherty had decided not to run again, and Russ thanked her for her service on the Board. Nominations were taken from the floor. Nominated were Judy Lang, Christine Wright, Greg Nowicki, and Kim Wilcox. Greg Nowicki and Christine Wright were elected for a 2-year term on the board.

2021 Summary, Rod Ofte: General Manager, presented a summary and highlights of 2021. Highlights included increased producer pay price. A new record average of \$2.36 was paid to producers in 2021. The Co-op was awarded a \$250,000 Value Added Producer Grant by the USDA. Cattle finishing by members has continued to improve. We hired our first full-time employee. We introduced the dog bones. The Landjaeger and Summer Sausage that came out in 2020 were fully put into production and sales in 2021.

There were also several challenges in 2021. They include a wildly fluctuating conventional beef market, a challenge to recover our lost restaurant business, having multi destination processors, trim utilization hindered growth, the loss of our Chicago distributor, and our full-time employee Anders Unseth resigned in December.

Outlook: Rod Ofte, General Manager, gave a brief outlook of the Co-op going into 2022. The focus will be on continuing to improve the quality and stability of our live

animal pipeline, the online expansion of our B2C business, geographic expansion in Chicago and the Twin Cities, firm up the Pastured Pork Program, grow our Value-Added products with the introduction of beef bacon and USDA processed pork.

2022 Business Approach: For 2022, the Co-op is looking for a 3% increase in sales with estimated profit of \$59,000.

Website and Social Media: Angie Lindloff gave an update on the websites and social media. She highlighted the 2022 marketing plan that involves funds from the USDA grant.

B2C Update: Rod presented the highlights and challenges of the B2C system going into 2022. He introduced Josh Miner, who was just recently hired to replace Anders. Highlights for 2021 include expanded distribution range, new box formats and product options, increased customer contacts, strong repeat customers and conversions to half steer orders, and record utilization of our raw products.

Challenges include fielding and responding to questions and feedback from the website and 800#. There were a few box quality and delivery service issues that had to be worked through. With the increased product offerings, there are increased complexity and volume of stock.

Awards Presentation: The Co-op lost long-time member and Board member Jon Lee last year, so his daughters were on hand to help Rod present the first "Jon Lee-WGBC Member of the Year Award to Brett Danke. The WGBC Service Award was presented to long-time member and past Board member Gene Schreifer. Gene is also now the FSA Executive Director of Wisconsin, so he gave a presentation on what the FSA has available to help Co-op members.

Sponsors: Sponsors of the meeting this year were Lorentz Meats, Byron Seed, Compeer Financial, WEDC, Nordik Meats, WI Farmers Union, QLF, and Johnson's Sausage Shoppe.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. Members turned in their surveys in exchange for a box of Landjaeger. Happy hour was sponsored by Johnson's Sausage Shoppe.



2022 Board Members: (Back, L to R) Russ Endres, Darrin Yanke, Brett Danke, Daniel Wiederholt, Greg Nowicki (Front, L to R) Judy Fossen, Christine Wright

LIVESTOCK PROCUREMENT

When shipping animals, PLEASE remember to make sure your animals are clearly identified with either an ear or back/hip tag that is legible and securely attached.

Also note ALL ID tags on the shipping affidavit. With multiple members shipping upwards of 45+ head, it becomes impossible to sort out whose animals are whose if more than 1 has a missing or illegible tag, or if the tags are not noted on the affidavit.

To get the latest producer prices or book your next processing date, please contact:

Josh Miner
josh@wisconsingrassfed.coop
1-800-745-9093

WGBC TO INTRODUCE PASTURED PORK PRODUCTS

It's a great time to be involved with the cooperative as we expand our offering to include value-added pastured pork products. The products scheduled for launch in 2023 include: Smoked Shredded Pork, Nitrate-Free Smoked Bacon, Fresh Bratwurst, Ground Pork Sausage and Ground Pork. These products will be available to our distribution channel in early 2023 with promotional plans to feature at upcoming events in southern Wisconsin.

As we expand and grow as a cooperative, be sure to connect with any board member or anyone on the management team to learn how you can be part of telling our story and showcasing our products. We are excited about expansion of the pastured pork to consumers and the value it brings to our cooperative!



WISCONSIN MEADOWS PASTURED PORK

Sustainably Raised by Local Wisconsin Family Farms

Green grass, blue sky and the crystal-clear waters of Wisconsin are the ingredients in Wisconsin Meadows Pastured Pork. Our Wisconsin family farms are committed to producing high quality, sustainably-raised livestock – without the use of growth hormones, antibiotics, GMOs, or chemical herbicides or pesticides. Every package is cryovac-sealed for freshness.

**TASTE THE DIFFERENCE
ORDER TODAY!**

| PRODUCT/SKU | UPC NUMBER | CASE PACK & WEIGHT | CASE SIZE | WHOLESALE | PALLET |
|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| Smoked Shredded Pastured Pork - 1 lb. | 787790927457 | 35/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$6.99/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |
| Smoked Shredded Pastured Pork - 5 lbs. | 787790927754 | 7/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$5.99/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |
| Nitrate-Free Smoked Bacon - 1 lb. | 787790927556 | 35/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$7.99/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |
| Fresh Bratwurst - 1 lb. | 787790927853 | 35/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$6.99/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |
| Ground Pork Sausage - 1 lb. | 787790928157 | 35/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$4.99/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |
| Ground Pastured Pork - 1 lb. | 787790928058 | 35/Case - 35 lbs. | 17" x 11.5" x 10.5" | \$4.49/lb. | 32/8 ti x 4 hi |

Effective: December 1, 2022



PASTURED PORK PRICES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2022

Please review the prices and tier system noted below.

| Hanging Carcass Weight (HCW) | PRICE |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Hogs weighing under 210 lbs. | \$1.40/lbs. HCW |
| Hogs weighing 211 – 250 lbs. | \$1.50/lbs. HCW |
| Hogs weighing 251 – 270 lbs. | \$1.40/lbs. HCW |
| Hogs weighing 271 – 300 lbs. | \$1.10/lbs. HCW |
| Hogs weighing 301 – 350 lbs. | \$.75/lbs. HCW |
| Hogs weighing over 351 lbs. | \$.50/lbs. HCW |

Any questions, please contact the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative at 1-800-745-9093 or email josh@wisconsingrassfed.coop on the pastured pork program.

WGBC MEMBERS RECEIVE 10% ONLINE DISCOUNT

All Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative members and their families get a 10% discount on all products placed online at www.wisconsinmeadows.com. Order your favorite beef or pork product and have it delivered right to your doorstep for free!



**ORDER ONLINE:
WWW.WISCONSINMEADOWS.COM
ENTER CODE: WGBC10**

WGBC DONATES TO FOOD PANTRY



On behalf of the Wisconsin Meadows brand, Josh Miner made it a point to go out of his way to help those in need. Miner is the Business to Consumer (B2C) Channel Manager for the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative. Josh contacted the manager of the WAFER Food Bank, in LaCrosse Wis., to see if there was any need for locally raised beef products. Wafer was more than excited to get a donation of beef. Due to its cost, high quality beef is rarely seen in food banks. LaCrosse and Vernon counties have one of the largest populations of WGBC farmer members, in



part due to the perfect grazing topography of the driftless region. The cooperative donated a 500 lb. pallet of mixed beef roasts, steaks and hamburger to the WAFER food bank, an approximate \$5,000 value.

Miner commented "As a cooperative, our role in society is not just to make a profit. We also exist to help local communities and citizens. Our cooperative is made up of nearly 250 small family farms spread out across Wisconsin in over 50 counties. We continue to grow in part because consumers care about family farms, healthy animals and clean water." The members of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative should be proud to not only produce high quality livestock for consumption but also be proud that the organization has the ability to give back to local communities for those in need.

WGBC INTRODUCES

"MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM"

A Member Development Program, managed by the WGBC Board of Directors, has been introduced to help all members learn more about specific grazing techniques and raise quality grass-fed beef and pastured pork. Throughout the year, the board will pinpoint specific events or activities which could benefit our members. To kick off this program, the cooperative offered free GrassWorks conference attendance passes, meals and a hotel room allowance to two lucky members for a valuable learning and networking opportunity. All WGBC members had an opportunity to register for this giveaway. For this event, the winners are Jenn and Eric Rittenhouse of Elroy, and Rhett Jaquish of Sauk City. GrassWorks Grazing Conference is scheduled for February 2-4, 2023 in Wisconsin Dells, Wis. which is a highly recommended conference dedicated to producers interested in pasture management, animal health, overwintering, finishing, custom grazing, farm finances, soil health, weed control, handling drought, new technology, marketing and more. Visit www.grassworks.org for more information or to register for this featured conference.

