

WISCONSIN GRASS-FED BEEF COOPERATIVE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES Held at Wintergreen
Conference Center on February 17th, 2024

Introduction: President Brett Danke called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Started with member introductions. 25 farms were represented by attendance at the meeting. Each farm gave a brief introduction of themselves.

Rod Ofte, General Manager, reviewed the agenda for the day.

Guest Speaker: Nick Besasis, NRCS NW WI Grazing Specialist, gave a presentation on a variety of grazing topics including forage diversity, warm season grasses, cropland grazing, annual forages, stockpile grazing, bale grazing, and available programs from NRCS.

Approve 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes: Greg Nowicki, former Secretary and current Treasurer provided the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting in a written newsletter sent to all members in January. Motion by Christine Wright to approve the minutes, second by Russ Endres. Motion passed.

2023 Summary: Rod Ofte, General Manager, presented a summary and highlights of 2023. Shared structure of organization and introduced the employees and contractors that make up the team. Attendance at Grassworks and Marbleseed Conferences and product demonstrations was discussed. Highlights of 2023 included: Value-Added Producer Grant Funding (ended now), Improved finishing levels, record high producer pay prices, over \$700,000 in business with Wisconsin food banks, record \$50,000 patronage dividend. Challenges of 2023 included: Sky rocketing cattle prices, beef herd at all time low, 7 price increases to customers, slow recovery of restaurants after Covid, increased processing costs. Pastured Pork increased from 171 hogs processed in 2022 to 389 hogs in 2023, with good margins. 6% sales total sales growth in 2023 from about \$3,057,664 in 2022 to \$3,233,041 in 2023.

2024 New Products: Ground Dog Food, Smoked Uncured Beef Bacon (Retail-ready Nitrate Free)

2024 Business Approach: Strategically shrink as face challenges mentioned above, and especially cattle supply. Margin management and utilization will be key. Expecting to process 10 to 15% less cattle in 2024. Expecting 2024 sales of \$2.8 million.

Board of Directors Introduction: Brett gave introduction to Board of Directors and responsibilities of being a director. Two seats were open for election this year. Vice President Judy Fossen had decided not to run again. Brett ran for re-election. Brett thanked the current and former members of the board for their work. Nominations for the board and election will take place after lunch.

Lunch Break was taken at 11:52 am. Meeting resumed at 1:08 pm.

Board Member Nominations and Election Results: Treasurer Greg Nowicki conducted nominations and election. Nominations were taken from the floor. Nominated was Joe Stevens and Brett. With no other nominations, Natasha Paris made motion to cast unanimous ballot for Brett and Joe. Second by Bob Pesz. With no objections, Brett and Joe were elected to three-year terms.

Website and Social Media: Angie Lindloff gave an update on the websites and social media. Topics included data on website traffic, subscriptions, Google and Google Ads, email campaigns and search

engine optimization (SEO). Summary of work being done with Taste Profit in 2024 to improve of brand messaging, website, and email marketing was given.

Break was taken at 1:43 pm. Meeting resumed at 2:19 pm.

B2C and Procurement Update: Josh Miner gave an update on the 2023 Animal Procurement. 906 total fats shipped to cooperative, with 44% of then grading choice, 33% grading high select (Tier 1), and 23% grading low select/standard. 47 members shipped cattle. 67 cull cows/bulls shipped. 389 hogs shipped. 2023 B2C sales were discussed with topics including increased custom sales, more navigable website, area in which products can ship, and email campaigns.

Producer Panel: Greg moderated discussion featuring cooperative members Paul Beskar, Daniel Wagner, and Jim Munsch. Each gave quick summary of their farming operation. Topics discussed included wintering strategy, cattle genetics, hay type and source, age of finished cattle, and pasture rotation frequency, among others.

Awards Presentation: Rod presented the "Jon Lee Award"-WGBC Service Award to Pete Procknow. The WGBC Member of the Year Award was awarded to Daniel Wagner.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 pm. Members turned in their surveys in exchange for a future shipment of box of Wisconsin Meadows products. A social hour was held in the Wintergreen Bar with complimentary food and drinks.

Sponsors of the meeting this year: Lorentz Meats, Byron Seed, Nordik Meats, and WI Farmers Union.