



Fellow Connoisseurs of Food Raised in Sunshine,

April 17, 2019

Changes, changes. In so many ways, change is almost synonymous with life. For if *life is what happens when we are busy making other plans*, it is both humbling and frightening to recognize how little control we all exert over so many important aspects in our lives. We make plans. Life throws curve balls. We adapt. In this light, life is indeed a sequence of reactionary responses to inevitable change.

As you read on, you will recognize the many reactionary responses we have implemented this season. We are adapting to the substantial effects of climate change. We are adapting to mitigate risks induced by regulatory politics. We are adapting to consumer preference and changes in demographics.

We're not throwing in the towel. We're mitigating risks while buying some time. However, if organic/pastured/grassfed consumers continue to believe that imported and CAFO organic offerings now offered in the supermarkets are the same as what we offer, then eventually, we may very well get booted from this market. In this respect, those entities behind the regulatory obstacles - Farm Bureau, USDA, DATCP - performed their role by only fabricating the boot. It is the organic-minded consumers who will put this boot on - performing the actual deed of kicking small local farms from the market.

We've also had our share of change on the home front. We've had our second wedding within seven months. Richie, our oldest, was married just a few weeks ago on March 16th. Richie and his wife Ashlee live west of Honey Lake in a home they are remodeling. Richie, with his Environmental/Biology BA is a project manager for a small family business in Elkhorn that specializes in environmental abatement. Ashlee has a Business degree and is now working at InPro in Muskego, where Michelle works. As many of you already know, Sheri was married here on the farm this past August. Sheri and her husband Bryan live on a farm southwest of Columbus where they are remodeling an old farmhouse, raising feeder beef and running a seed business. Their place is just up the road from the family farm where Bryan grew up custom raising several hundred dairy heifers. Bryan is gradually assuming a larger role on the family farm. Sheri earned her master's degree in social work in 2018 and is now the Behavior Health Specialist manager for a large swath of Wisconsin. Sarah, our youngest, is receiving her BA in Biology from UW Madison this May. Her application for enrollment into Madison's Nursing program is currently a work in progress. Many of you long time supporters may well remember Sarah as the little girl on the porch on pickup days, selling her lemonade, gods-eyes and polished rocks to anyone who may have intentionally...or accidentally... been lured into her space! :)

Even though our nest is now empty, you'll likely still see all of them here helping on pickup days! But some details and timing have changed so please read on to learn how this ever-changing world is influencing the way we operate this farm.

As always, we appreciate the time you take to read these newsletters as well as your support for what we do. This farm represents nothing more than an idle sailboat, bobbing in the waves, waiting for the wind to blow. The wind in our sails comes exclusively from the collective support provided by you and the many others who believe in the quality, integrity and transparency induced when local people support local farming.

Thank you! Steve & Family

## Looking Back

As we had learned the hard way last season, there is great risk in outrunning our headlights. In 2018, we were forced to sell a substantial percentage as ground beef and ground pork. By force, I mean that we found ourselves up against an impending butcher date without having sold every animal. Butcher dates are use-it-or-lose-it. If we can't sell by the scheduled date, we carry those animals for perhaps a full year before another processing date opens. Whereas ground beef and ground pork proved to be extremely popular, my marketing instincts told me we would be competing directly with supermarket pseudo organic/grassfed. As such, it was too risky to price our grassfed ground beef and organically-fed ground pork at any price other than to match the supermarket. As such, the ever-increasing processing costs that the farm paid to the butcher consumed much of the margins. As I've illustrated for years in these newsletters:  $\text{Farmer's margin} \times \text{livestock volume} = \text{income}$ . When margins are reduced, volume of livestock MUST rise to obtain the same income. This is THE race which forces farms to get big or get out. Getting big is also the antithesis of many, if not all, organic-minded supporters. Yet the temptation to buy on price alone continues to drive the organic/pastured/grassfed market. Please recognize the irony that organic consumers are imposing upon the market that they themselves created. When local is thrown under the proverbial bus, the Farm-to-Table foundation crumbles.

As a result, we are offering just half the amount of beef and chicken this season. Pork is reduced by roughly a quarter. With the DATCP mandating that 8 dz eggs/day requires a Food Processing Plant, it is just a matter of time before pastured egg availability follows suit. Please visit the Farm Bureau vs Organic pages on our website for much more on this subject.



Interestingly, (frustratingly) at the time of harvest, we had a wait list of people proving that we could have indeed sold every animal at our normal full production level. This is happening because many people will only commit once they are certain they have nothing else on their schedule - which occurs just days before harvest.

Please note that there are just three pastured chicken dates this season and that they are all in early June.

## Farm Bureau vs Organic (OLPP)

This situation personifies the regulatory/political changes. These changes have induced organic consumer behavior to accept supermarket pseudo organic, pastured and grassfed products. This subject was addressed via the information sent out in early March. A substantial amount of expanded information on this topic has been uploaded onto our website. I encourage everyone to please visit these pages. I did put these pages together hastily. However, the content is critical to understanding and recognizing not just agribusiness/government bias against niche market (non-commodity) farming, but indeed the blatancy which leads to the allegation of corruption. You will find the Farm Bureau vs Organic Principles link on our homepage at [www.solarharvestfarm.com](http://www.solarharvestfarm.com)



## Demographic Changes

The recognized changes in demographics and resultant adaptations we've implemented are based on an unfortunate reality: The Baby Boom generation, which constituted the largest demographic amidst supporters of Farm-to-Table, have either retired or have empty nests. The number of long-term supporters who have moved out of the area or have greatly reduced their needs is substantial. Of course, this is a natural progression through life. Yet we are having great difficulty finding younger people who support this format of Farm-to-Table. Yes, there is a diverse array of ages frequenting farmer's markets as well as purchasing the commodity organic/pastured/grassfed offerings now found in supermarkets. It appears that the inconvenience associated with coming directly to the farm is unpalatable. Farmer's selling at farmers markets accept a much higher level of indirect expense. Commodity organic found in supermarkets induces wholesale take-it-or-leave-it pricing on farmers. In many cases, farmers work under tenuous contract circumstances, often producing product which is organic, pastured or grassfed in name only. Buying local, by coming directly onto the farm to retrieve your order, is the only means of assuring legitimacy.

## Climate Change on the Farm

Whereas all of us in this area are experiencing the same pendulum shifts of weather, perhaps not everyone is aware of the complications these extremes have induced upon a diversified, pasture-based livestock farm. Most notably, a farmer's most challenging season - oft referred to as Mud Season - has evolved from two months to upwards of six months. Mud is the enemy of preventative farming techniques. Obvious to everyone, mud is messy. When on pasture, the presence of mud means a planting has been damaged - perhaps permanently.



In winter, the presence of mud means unfrozen ground. Hence, microbes - good and bad - enjoy high mobility. In spring, summer and fall, mud means excessive rains. The local cloudbursts have been so persistent that for two straight seasons, we have not had one window of opportunity for making hay. Our farm consists predominantly of heavy soils. Excessive spring rains are saturating these soils making it impossible to put haying equipment in the fields without damage. Our livestock rotations are being modified weekly, redirecting animal traffic onto areas least likely to be damaged. Our previously wonderful hog bedding packs have become the equivalent of wet mattresses - impossible to dry after full saturation. As such, composting conditions have deteriorated. This matters less due to the simple fact that the fields could not tolerate the weight of a tractor and spreader without rutting and compaction. As of this writing in March, our 2018 hog areas remain untouched - too wet to handle in 2018 and frozen like a rock amidst the this very Arctic back half of winter.

Interseeding of improved species of forage has been almost impossible. Some previous seedings have been drowned out. We finally had one ten day period in late summer in which conditions allowed some interseeding with minimal compaction. As these seedings germinated nicely, we thought we dodged a bullet - only to watch these new germinations ultimately fail amidst excessive fall rains.

I did also notice that the rabbits seemed to be standing in line to devour anything I reseeded. It was then and there that I first realized - that I had a (wait for it).....*reseeding hare line*.



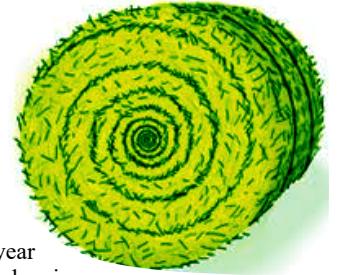
Late summer and early fall have historically given us our best opportunities for making hay - this because the grazing herd has been greatly depopulated by that time. This window of opportunity has now also been closed, thanks to excessive untimely rains. Historically, we have resorted to placing the carry-over cattle (the cattle that grazed all season but were not included in that season's harvests) back into the woods for fall grazing and browsing. For the first time since buying this farm in 1993, our backwoods acreage remained inundated all season. We have not been able to maintain paths. The deer are destroying the fencing.

Making lemonade from a lemon season, we made the best of it by micro managing stockpiled fall forage. Whereas we still had no hay made, we did extend our grazing season well into December, accepting some pasture damage as an inevitable consequence. Micro managing means that we were forced to constantly deviate from the normal, efficient grazing rotation. This means adjusting the location of the next paddock, not by efficient movement into adjacent paddocks, but by redirecting animals to higher or lower ground, dependent upon weather forecasts and field conditions. Our laneway systems were given quite the workout. Additionally, we were forced to creatively construct temporary laneways in response to excessive, unforecast rains.

## Hay Jude - Don't Make it Bad...

take a sad season, and make it better.

A silver lining, in an odd sort of way, allowed a substantial hay shortage to occur in a season where executive decisions were imminent. Clearly we needed to reduce the size of our herd. (Not just because of climate - but more on that later.) What better year to do this than the year in which we have no hay in the mow. Finding good quality hay is difficult even in good years. Finding hay in bad years is extremely expensive - often for poor quality. Because excessive rains prevented or damaged a very high percentage of farms in a large geographic area, demand greatly exceeded supply. Horse farms and hobbyists were driving prices into unreasonable territory. This simple reality - expensive hay with very low relative feed value - induced an unprecedented decision for our grassfed herd. We had never once fed corn or small grains to our herd. Yet the cost per ton for low quality hay had now reached the same cost per ton as high quality certified organic oats and barley. I agonized over this decision, knowing it would have implications on many fronts while at the same time feeling backed into a corner. The first decision was made to raise half as many calves. We then minimized early hay consumption with the luck of grazing into December, accepting some pasture damage as collateral. We moved forward with purchasing a certified organic blend of oats and barley. Top dressing hay feeders with just a few pounds of this oat/barley mix offsets a considerable amount of hay. If the hay were of lesser nutritional quality, it would be physically impossible for the cattle to consume enough hay to equal the feed value of those few pounds of oats and barley. Yet even after these decisions, we still needed 70 tons of hay to make it through the winter.



Why oats and barley instead of corn? Corn is risky for unassimilated ruminants potentially creating acidosis and bloating. The oats and barley are higher in fiber and lower in omega 6 fatty acids. As the pasture season once again allows us back onto an exclusive forage-based diet, we will again begin inducing the preferred omega 3 fatty acids as has been our protocol since inception. Things don't always work as planned. We adapted to the circumstances in the manner that we feel was best for the livestock and the end product. Unbeknownst to us at the time of that decision, winter was about to bear down hard on all of us. That additional energy provided by this decision most certainly stoked the metabolism of those animals to better endure the extreme cold and wind.

## Changing Pastured Chicken Variety - Again

The die was cast after our 2015 switch from Cornish Cross to Red Rangers - consumer acceptance took a sharp drop the following season. Having raised Cornish Cross on pasture for almost 20 years prior to this change, we begged for some time to adjust to the new variety. Improvements made in 2016, still using Red Rangers did yield bigger birds, but still, no comparison to the big meaty breasts found on Cornish. In 2017 and 2018, we hoped to resolve this by switching again, this time to Freedom Rangers (similar to Red Rangers, often referred to as one-in-the-same but nevertheless, different). We anticipated better results with the Freedom Rangers, not just because of different genetics, but also because the hatchery offered an all cockerel option. They have a strong market for the hens which allows both genders to be desirable to different marketing niches. In respect to achieving bigger





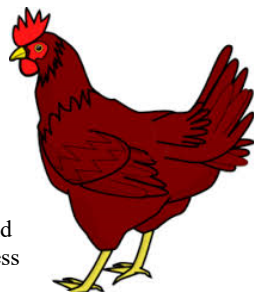
birds, we were successful. Yet it appeared as though many previously loyal customers remained unwilling to come back to pastured poultry without the allure associated with the still larger and considerably younger - Cornish Cross. Those who have been with us through the years know full well that considerably higher volumes of Pastured Cornish Cross had been selling out very early in the season. Yet even with lower volumes of Freedom Rangers being raised, we found ourselves in quite a pickle as harvest dates approached, yet not all birds were claimed.

I don't know if words can induce the anxiety that we feel as chicken, beef and pork harvest dates approach claimed. Those harvest dates to a year in advance. Once course. This forces us to time marketing amidst tense days of the season not only do we find thing, but in doing so, ering more demand than



Many people have been but only once harvest they are certain they have on their calendar. Procuring from the farm is no longer the priority that it used to be. Yes, part of this is because we no longer were raising the big, meaty Cornish Cross. But even more so, many are relying on the newer offerings that many supermarkets are now carrying- that being the products labeled as Organic, Grassfed and Pastured. The politics associated with these labels is covered later in this newsletter. The implications to small farms have proven to be monumental.

Consumer preference as well as Freedom Ranger performance have twisted our arm to the point of breaking. The message from consumers has been received: *Switch back to Cornish Cross*. In regards to performance, unbeknownst to most everyone, from a purely financial aspect, the switch to Freedom Rangers was expensive. Our initial motivation to change was driven by the liabilities inherent to Cornish Cross. As we've learned, the alternatives carry many liabilities of their own. Most notably is the correlation between weight gain and age at harvest. Younger, heavier birds have proven to be the favorite amongst consumers. Younger and heavier also equates to less feed consumption, less labor and far less risk.



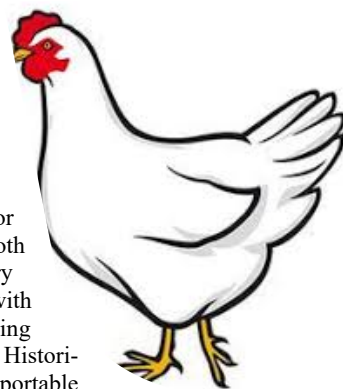
From the producer's perspective, risk alone, presents itself as a prime antagonist to change. As I observe the methods used by other pasture-based farms, it is clear that our specific geographic area is especially prone to predation. Our farm is located within a very wild area. Yes, there are wilder areas elsewhere. But the difference here may be that this wild area we farm within is an oasis of wildness amidst a larger area prone to development. The woods, lowlands and marshes within several miles of our farm all contain places that human-beings rarely, if ever trespass upon the solitude of wildlife. This area is a refuge for hawks, owls, eagles, coyotes, fox, weasels, raccoons and opossums - who all love to eat organic, pastured chicken.

We'd successfully mitigated the hawk's aerial predation by raising the chickens in the pasture closest to human activity. We spent good money installing tight mesh woven wire around this pasture, effectively preventing daytime coyote and fox predation. However, the nocturnal challenges have been formidable. Raising pastured livestock in our area requires a farmer's presence within a very specific narrow window of time at both sunrise and sunset. This changes with the angle of the sun. Hence, if a farmer opens up too early or closes up too late, the predators are watching from the closest cover ready to capitalize on the farmer's error. Evolution is observable as survival of the fittest reveals itself through the Great Horned Owls whose pupils tolerate greater light levels. These owls either possess this trait, or perhaps have simply recognized that they need to arrive before humans show up to enclose their dinner. Many times I have felt eyes on me, with a scanning of the low light horizon revealing the silhouette of a Great Horned Owl perched on a tree top, perhaps hoping I would have been late that evening.

Of course, raccoons easily scale the woven wire fence and they are voracious killers. Opossums and determined coyote and fox will exploit any ground level gap, often digging it deeper for access. For this reason, the pastured chickens must first all instinctively return to their shelter at sundown and we must quickly arrive to close the hatches. We have been willing to fulfill our part of this security protocol. Unfortunately, an influential number of Freedom Ranger genetic variations do not possess the otherwise innate calling to return to the protection of their shelter. Many continued to prefer ground roosting, huddling in groups in tall pasture or simply camping out directly outside the shelter. Herding chickens is similar to herding cats. Attempting to move chickens in darkness sends them into a panic - almost always away from the shelter to hide in the tall grass. Of course, the creatures of the night, both aerial and ground-based, will find these birds if we don't find them first.

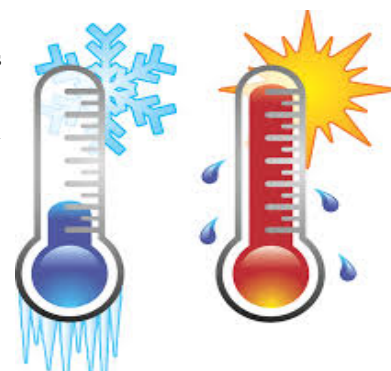


For all these reasons, we've had enough. Change or stop offering pastured poultry. This is why we are now back to Cornish. Even though we already have many years experience raising this variety, we will yet again be diving into a new combination. Unlike the portable shelters that were moved every-day yet contained the birds within that 10 x 12 foot shelter, the Cornish Cross will now take over the Freedom Ranger huts. These are substantially larger, deep bedded shelters to which the chickens must instinctively return to at twilight. Given that the pasture area is substantially larger than this volume of birds can consume, the concern will once again be centered upon the home roosting instinct.



So as you may likely recognize, the superior freedom of this method presents itself as both asset and liability. Regardless, the primary benefit of the large deep-bedded huts lies with the simple recognition that this deep bedding places the birds many inches above grade. Historically, one of the greatest liabilities of the portable shelters was realized with every heavy cloudburst, often leaving the birds standing in belly deep water forcing us into the shelters at 2 am amidst a nasty storm with many bales of straw (in 14 shelters), throwing islands of straw down to get the birds up off the saturated field. Additionally, the portable shelters required a preventative emergency storm procedure to keep them from blowing away - this involving multiple rebar stakes and full buckets of water hung from the ridge boards of each shelter when a storm was forecast. This usually worked. However over the years, we did loose a few shelters in straight-line winds. Conversely, the porta-huts are large and heavy. They are staked with T-posts as well as being mired into the deep bedding. They also are much better ventilated for those hot humid days as well as being warmer on the cold nights, thanks to the heat of the bedding composting beneath them at night.

Still, the harvests dates have been pulled ahead to early June as a means of mitigating heat risks, which came far too early in 2018 so we have adjusted accordingly. The substantially longer growing times needed for Freedom Rangers could not be harvested in early June unless we began raising the chicks in early March. Recall the sub-zero, high wind, snowy conditions we all experienced this March to recognize why this option was not on the table.



### A Case for Small Scale Low Volume Intermittent Processing

Where else can a person find an organically-fed pastured chicken which never left the farm until that very person took it home in their cooler? The farms that are willing to do the processing are few and far between. The benefit of small scale family processing are substantial - at least as critical to the quality of the chicken as the forage and certified organic feed that the bird consumed. No crating. No highway transportation. No butcher staging. No chlorine baths. No worries associated with unhappy, overworked and underpaid employees. There is complete certainty that the product you are receiving is the actual chicken raised on our farm. All processing labor is performed exclusively by family members.

How critical is the processing paradigm in respect to nutritional quality and food safety? Industrial processing promotes financial efficiency as it's top priority. Industry is certainly concerned with food safety. However, it's high speed efficiency creates a shoot-first-ask-questions-later safety protocol. Industry recognizes that high speed, high volume, perpetual processing induces collateral risks upon the product. These collateral risks are blatant. The industrial process IS the vector by which pathogens are efficiently, endemically and systemically dispersed directly onto each and every food product integral to the process. Again, the manufacturing engineers and food safety experts are fully aware of the risks inherent to the industrial processes they have designed and sanctioned.

Analogously, they are not trying to prevent a car from getting dirty as it drives through a manure-laden course. They are willingly and intentionally allowing the car to get filthy dirty because it is more cost effective to design and implement a car wash system than it is to prevent the car from being splattered with manure.



From a consumer's perspective, washing a car after it gets dirty is a reasonable resolution. It's just a car - mostly metal and plastic. A car isn't consumed within the human body nor is food cooked or processed on the hood of the car. There really is no logical reason to take extreme steps in *preventing* the car from getting dirty when there are no human health or safety reasons integral to the process of washing a car after-the-fact.

Now back to the industrial processing plant. The engineers and food safety experts have willfully and intentionally created a high speed process in which evisceration disperses manure and associated pathogens upon the carcasses of the 250,000 chickens processed in just one facility in just one production day. Of course, these engineers and food safety experts are not willful in the context of actually desiring this result.

They, like any rational human-being, would rather not have to deal with this potential. They most certainly could prevent this contamination from happening. Yet to do so would require the biological antagonists to be mitigated. This would require exponential reductions in volume and speed - both of which are key attributes effecting costs.



This is why industrial chickens are immersed in chlorine or trisodium phosphate baths - hundreds of thousands of chickens soaking in these industrial-sized chlorinated tanks every processing day. Recall that, like the dirty car, the food engineers did not prevent the manure from contaminating the carcass at evisceration. These engineers are using these chlorine baths to render the manure and potential pathogens lifeless. Small particles of chlorinated manure dissolve into the bath water. Timers determine when one batch has soaked long enough. Sterilized product is moved out, a new batch enters - all day until the last of the days 250,000 chickens is through the baths. As to any potential pathogens remaining on the carcass, these have been rendered harm-

less - and like the chlorinated bath water which had soaked into the meat - you are implored by food safety experts that this is safe to consume - provided you use extreme care in handling the raw product and cooking to prescribed safe temperatures.



Additionally, consumers of supermarket pork are encouraged to investigate the process used to "enhance" many pork products. Enhancing is a euphemism pertaining to the injection of brine solutions composing up to 20% of the weight of a package of pork. Numerous closely spaced needles are used to pump brine solutions deep into meat. Excess fluids are recaptured and returned to the tank for use. Consumer concerns: Potential surface pathogens that may be pushed deep into the meat; Consumers are paying meat prices for the entire package weight when up to 20% is actually brine; The question as to why the pork requires a brine solution to be palatable.

Who really knows what the bottom of those chlorine baths looks like at the end of a long processing day? Cleaning those tanks is relegated to an unseen night shift employee - an underpaid individual typically exploited because of tenuous immigration status. The food safety expert which sanctioned these methods doesn't have to handle the smelly sludge left in the bottom of these tanks - isn't left to ponder the fact that only moments ago, food - in it's final phase of processing - was in direct contact with the liquids in that very tank. It's all out of sight and out of mind.



Ignorance is Bliss - indeed.

### Regulatory Obstruction

The first generation of small farms functioning within the Farm-to-Table sector are reaching maturity. It is easy to recognize that a high percentage of these farms are operated by farmers in their 50's and 60's. Knowing that the regulatory environment is tethered to a one-size-fits-all industrial paradigm, the viability of Farm-to-Table, Gen 2, remains tenuous. The relationship between industrial agriculture and it's governing agencies at both the federal and state levels has evolved to the level of blatant corruption. The ambiguity of this behavior is shrouded amidst the tight relationship between industrial farm associations and their regulators, all of whom recognize only the attributes that support their ideological beliefs. Industrial agriculture zealously believes their fossil-fuel/chemical/pharmaceutical methods are the only means capable of feeding the world. It has become incumbent upon regulators to facilitate this belief, advancing regulations which effectually protect both the margins and reputations of industrial commodity food products.

### Fracked Natural Gas - Coal-Based Electric Grid - Diesel Fuel Agronomy Chemicals - GMO Seed - Pharmaceuticals Corporate Commodity Food Suppliers

These entities represent the muscle behind Farm Bureau, USDA and DATCP. The only force more powerful than these vested interests are the collective muscles derived from consumers that care. If these consumers are willing to throw the attributes of Local under the proverbial bus in favor of supermarket convenience, the Farm-to-Table concept of food production will be eliminated as a market player.

### It's all Accidental Genius

Agribusiness has stumbled upon an ingenious means of capturing market share by simply manipulating human behavior - this made possible when two good-ole-boys from Georgia - Sonny Perdue and Zippy Duvall - simultaneously assumed positions of power within USDA and Farm Bureau.

Yet amidst the media and a society preoccupied between the extremes of survival... and comfort...

*Not a word is spoken - the church bells all seem broken.*



# Farm-to-Table

## Built upon *Firm Foundations* - or - *Regulatory Quicksand*?

The summary below illuminates the loads which currently stress the footings of smaller scale direct market farms. Amidst these conditions, can these farms remain viable through successive generations?

Recognize that the protest of a few farmers will be inaudible. Resolving these issues will require the power of many concerned consumers.



- The nation's largest industrial farm organization, the American Farm Bureau, was successful in lobbying the USDA for the denigration of USDA Organic standards, effectively opening the floodgates for further expansion of commodity CAFO Organic.
- The trend amongst organic-minded consumers demonstrates supermarket convenience has been prioritized ahead of eating local. Supermarkets have expanded their offerings within the labels of Certified Organic, Grassfed and Pastured. Supermarket pricing for these expanded offerings often undercut local producers forcing local farmers to compete with CAFO Organic economies of scale.
- Since 2016, Country-of-Origin Labeling has not been restored for beef and pork products. Consequently, it is impossible for consumers to know the standards or country in which supermarket beef and pork were produced. The repeal of COOL for beef and pork products has also allowed supermarkets to procure not just conventional meats, but also Grassfed Beef from foreign suppliers. This convenience coupled with competitive pricing has undermined support for locally-produced Grassfed offerings.
- USDA regulations allow imported beef and pork to be labeled as "Product of the USA". Distributors of supermarket meats are allowed to label these foreign-produced meats as a Product of the USA by arranging for foreign meat shipments to be inspected by USDA inspectors. This has greatly increased the volume of Grassfed Beef products offered by supermarkets. Yet not only are consumers purchasing a foreign product labeled as a product of the USA, there's no means by which the consumer can validate if this foreign product was actually Grassfed.
- Local demand for custom meat processing continues to exceed supply. Custom processing costs are rising. Lead times are 8-12 months. Many butcher shops prefer smaller quantities. Many can't or prefer not to accommodate 10 cattle or 25 hogs from one farmer forcing small farms to operate inefficiently.
- Wisconsin DATCP prohibits ANY on-farm processing of beef and pork - even if mutually consensual between consumer and producer.
- Wisconsin DATCP prohibits on-farm poultry processing at income levels above hobbyist.
- Wisconsin DATCP regulates the requirement of a Food Processing Plant License for farms with 151 laying hens.

As processing demand continues to grow against stagnant supply, neither existing processors nor entrepreneurs are willing to invest to meet untapped demand. A Jefferson area vacated abattoir (Schroedl's) sits idle for years with no buyer. It appears evident that the requirements the DATCP has imposed upon both new and potential expansion of small scale processors has disincentivized job creation in this sector. DATCP's *Ideological perfection has become the enemy of the good*. As some failing dairy farms now convert to beef and existing processors continue to absorb an ever increasing share of this limited kill floor capacity to replenish their own expanding meat sales, the concern for custom processing capacity effectively extinguishes the expansion of non-commodity agriculture in Wisconsin. An interim solution focuses on the expense and limits of existing kill floor capacity: With consent between consumer and farmer, the DATCP must allow the kill to be performed on the farm.





## Members of the Coalition for Accurate Product Labeling

Corporations deciding what you need - and don't need to know.

Their concern: *How might labels effect their bottom line?*

Your concern: *How might ingredients effect your health and environment?*

Their response: **Trust OUR science...we're the experts.**



Most icons are active links to respective websites. Explore to evaluate how corporate labeling concerns may compare to yours.



Naphthalene Council





# Solar Harvest Farm

**2019** Harvest Schedule for Pastured Meats & Eggs

Keep on your refrigerator for future reference!

www.solarharvestfarm.com



**Please Compare Apples to Apples! Our Chickens & Hogs consume *Forage & Certified Organic* Feed!**

Unless a **Non-GMO** (or **Natural**) label explicitly states **Certified Organic**, the Non-GMO/Natural feed is produced with **Chemicals**. We do not use chemicals!

**Pastured Chicken Certified Organic Feed Price:** Qty: 3-9 \$4.49/lb Qty: **10-19 \$4.29/lb** Qty: **20 + \$3.99/lb**

Whole chickens typically 4 - 6 lbs dressed available fresh (NOT frozen) on the dates noted below in green. These chickens never leave the farm until you take them home to your freezer! Processed on the farm directly by family members just a few hours prior to your arrival. Here's how to obtain:

- 1). Choose a date in which you will be available to pickup your order.
- 2). Email us to reserve your order. (Or call if you don't have email.) Also tell us if you want livers, hearts or gizzards. (Note: Priced at the same rate as the chicken.)
- 3). Mark it on your calendar!

Arrive on the designated date and time with ample cooler space and ice. To assure availability it is best to reserve your needs well in advance.

However, because openings sometimes occur at the last minute, feel free to inquire at any time!

Volume pricing requirements: Picked-up on time; Single payment per order.

**5th Season with No Price Increases On Any Products**

**Pastured Eggs Certified Organic Feed Price:** \$6.00/dz (Equates to approx \$3.30/lb) 2dz min order. Pickup Mon. thru Sat.

**Pig-Happy Pork Certified Organic Feed Price:** Half Hog \$3.99/lb Downpayment: \$100/half  
Whole Hog \$3.69/lb\*

**Grassfed Beef Rotationally-Grazed Price:** Quarter Beef \$5.49/lb Downpayment: \$100/Qtr  
Half \$5.29/lb\* Whole Beef \$4.99/lb\*

**\*Volume discounts available provided that the order, deposit and final payment are under one name.** (Please handle splits between individuals internally amongst your participants.) Pork/Beef pricing is based on hanging wt. Processing costs are extra with estimates listed on the next page.

Our livestock do not receive hormones, medicated feed or rendered by-products. **The feed provided to the chickens and hogs is CERTIFIED ORGANIC by M.O.S.A.** In addition, the chickens and pigs consume respectable amounts of our organic forage.

Our Grassfed beeves are raised on their mother's milk and pasture for the first 7-8 months before weaning onto a winter diet of hay\* and organic mineral. In spring the beeves are then finished exclusively on our rotationally-grazed pastures. The hay we make is organic however we must also purchase hay, some of which is not organic. Unlike row crops, purchased hay is never sprayed with herbicides or pesticides. As we work towards the goal of obtaining more land for making hay, we expect to diminish purchased hay accordingly. **\*2019 Update:** *The 2018 climate induced hay shortage forced us to modify our 2018/2019 beef winter feeding program. We opted to feed a small amount of Certified Organic oats and barley along with our limited hay supply. Once the pastures are ready in early May, we return to all forage. More details in newsletter.* Our soil fertility is enhanced via direct animal impact as well as our own compost. Mineral consists of Icelantic Kelp, Redmond salt, rock mineral and microbials. We do not use the standards of diesel fuel nor toxic insecticides for fly control.

**Organic electrical energy is produced on site via Solar and Wind power.**

**Calendar Details:** **GREEN** dates are picked up directly at the farm during the listed timeframe. The Sept 21 and Oct 5 dates utilize Detjens of Watertown as the butcher. Most people request that we bring these orders back to the farm. However, if Watertown is better for you, simply tell us and we will arrange for you to pickup directly. If you do decide for direct pickup in Watertown you will have a wider window of pickup date options. The dates in **BLUE** are for orders to be picked up directly at the butcher. Tell us which butcher you prefer when you submit your order. The **BLUE** dates shown represent the ESTIMATED BEGINNING of pickup options. Your actual availability date will be communicated to you by the butcher at which time you typically have two weeks to retrieve your order.

June	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	2	3	Pastured Chicken At Farm 4-6 pm 4	5	Pastured Chicken At Farm 4-6 pm 6	7	Pastured Chicken At Farm 1-3 pm 8
July	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	7	Hansen's Beef Pickup Begins 8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	Hansen's Beef Pickup Begins 15	16	17	18	19	20
September	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	15	16	17	18	19	20	Beef & Pork 10-Noon At Farm 21
October	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	Sept 29	Sept 30	1	2	3	4	Beef & Pork 10-Noon At Farm 5
	13	Hansen's Beef/Pork Pickup Begins 14	15	16	17	18	19



## Typical Costs for Half and Whole Pork

**2019**

Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ to Farm	Processing \$ to Butcher	Total Cost Estimate
Pork - Half Hog	90 lbs x \$3.99	\$359	\$89	\$448
Pork - Whole Hog	180 lbs x \$3.69	\$664	\$179	\$843

### Typical Yield From Half Hog (Double for Whole Hog.)

Cut	Lbs
Ham	16
Shoulder Roast	10.7
Ground Pork	10.2
Chops	9.4
Bacon	6.5
Loin Roast	5
Pork Hocks w/meat	4.2
Spare & Baby Back Ribs	3
Neck Bones w/meat	2.5
Liver (for liversausage)	2

Because of natural variations, you will be asked if you prefer large, medium or small with final costs commensurate to your decision.

Pork halves range from 70-120 lbs.  
Range potential of Total Pork Cost: \$350-\$680  
Beef quarters range from 90-160 lbs  
Range potential of Total Beef Cost: \$560-\$990

2018 July Beef will once again be approximately 25% heavier than the estimate below. If you prefer more beef, request the July harvest!



Take Home Weight - Half Hog > 69

## Typical Costs for Quarter and Half Beef

**2019**

Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ to Farm	Processing \$ to Butcher Detjens - Hansens	Total Cost Estimate Detjens - Hansens
Grassfed Beef - Quarter	120 lbs x \$5.49	\$659	\$75 - \$89	\$734 - \$748
Grassfed Beef - Half	240 lbs x \$5.29	\$1270	\$145 - \$169	\$1415- \$1439
Grassfed Beef - Whole	480 lbs x \$4.99	\$2395	\$290 - \$338	\$2685 - \$2733

### Typical Yield From Quarter Beef

Cut	Lbs
Ground Beef	27.8
Chuck Roast	16.7
Sirloin Steak	7.1
Round Steak	6.1
Soup Bones/Misc	5.8
Club Steak	5.5
Rump Roast	4.6
Sirloin Tip Roast	4.6
T-Bone Steak	3.8
Boneless Stew	2.8
Liver	2.5
Porterhouse Steak	1.6
Round Roast	1.3

\* Processing costs vary by butcher as well as your instructions. The lower price is Detjens. Detjen orders are typically brought back to our farm for convenient local pickup. However, you may pickup directly in Watertown if you prefer.

Hansen's orders are all picked up directly at the butcher. The Schedule page illustrates the respective butchershop dates.

Orders picked up directly at the butcher have the advantage of greater flexibility due to their regular store hours. Orders picked up at the farm must be picked up exclusively between 10am to Noon.

These are all reasonable ESTIMATES that represent just one of many ways the butcher can cut your order. If you have a preference, feel free to discuss your specific needs with the butcher.



Take Home Weight - Qtr Beef> 90

**Sticker shock? You are buying a year's worth of meat at one time!** Even if you bought the lowest quality meats from the supermarket, the equivalent cuts would cost \$1100 for a half of beef, \$450 for a whole of pork. Know that up to 12% of the weight of some supermarket pork is injected brine solution. You are paying "meat prices" for this brine liquid. We don't do this! We also can't and don't compete with mass-produced supermarket meats in just the same way that mass-produced meats cannot compete with our quality, nutrition and sustainability. However, if you were buying individual packages from the natural or organic meat case, our prices will save you money - and in almost all cases, provide you with a superior product!

Main point: When buying in bulk from our farm, the prices shown above are not THE added expense to your budget. The added expense is revealed by subtracting the cost of supermarket confinement meats from the cost to purchase our local pastured meats. When dividing this difference over 365 days, most people recognize this to be affordable, valuable and indeed essential.

Doesn't matter... You still need to spend less? Ask for a smaller weight! Overall costs are directly proportional to the hanging weight. Please see the potential range illustrated above and request "small".

\*The processing costs includes the fees associated with slaughter, cutting, wrapping, smoking and curing. Your order will be custom cut per the cutting instructions that you provide. If you've never done this, don't worry as the butcher will walk you through this effortlessly. We will also coach you prior to the harvest date. You may instruct the butcher to provide additional services at your own added expense. Examples of these added services include sausage making, patties, additional slicing or smoking, deboning, cryovac etc. Cost vary at different butchers. We also have no control over butcher price increases. The range we have illustrated is typical. Your actual costs may be more or less depending upon the requests that you make of the butcher.

Please note that a the nature of making ham, bacon and some sausage involves the addition of curing agents, spices and flavorings that may or may not be to your satisfaction. For those concerned, ask the butcher if they offer a sausage variety without MSG. If you are inclined, please make a point to ask the butcher the ingredients at the time you provide your cutting instructions. If you have questions you'd like answered before you place your order, please contact us or the butcher directly. For a revealing perspective on nitrates, please read <http://www.solarharvestfarm.com/Nitrates.pdf>.

We have raised these animals to provide the purest qualities available anywhere. To avoid the integration of undesirable ingredients, many people take their pork trimmings as pure ground pork and make their own sausage patties. It is easy, delicious and best of all, contains no additives other than spices. Penzeys offers many sausage seasonings. Refer to [www.penzeys.com](http://www.penzeys.com) for examples. If you prefer not to have your hams cured, you will receive "fresh hams" in their pure form. These are delicious pork roasts t in the crockpot, tender and juicy! Or simmer some with your favorite BBQ sauce, serve with rice or on a bun and the kids will love you - (even more)! Bacon is the exception. If you don't have it cured, it's called side pork which is quite different from smoked and cured bacon. If you take the ground pork and fresh hams in their natural forms, you receive the pure meat from this farm while saving the expenses associated with smoking and sausage making, (typically sausage adds \$1.50 per pound to whatever quantity you elect).

Freezer Space Required: Quarter Beef: 2.5 - 3 cubic feet. Half Pork: 2.5 - 3 cubic feet Visualize this: Picture 3 to 4 full size paper grocery bags for each quarter beef or half of pork.