



Solar Harvest Farm

2009 Spring Newsletter



Fellow Connoisseurs of Food Raised in Sunshine!

April 12, 2009

A lot of water has fallen over the dam since our last newsletter. So many elements are in flux that life feels a bit surreal. Perhaps this is due to the nature of our present dilemma - I mean, let's face it, irregardless of how well informed we are as to the cause of our meltdown, we can readily see that there was no actual physical instigator. No hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, volcanoes, no tsunamis. It's almost as if we were involved in a car crash in which everyone watching screams in horror, yet we right ourselves, perform a physical inventory - head ok? - breathing? bleeding? arms & legs work? 10 fingers, 10 toes? - yep, all systems clear - yet the onlookers still remain aghast.

There once was a time when the things associated with value and wealth were tangible things - essential things. Point being, they were ... *things!* They had dimension and weight. The average person could see the thing, measure the thing, and assess the value of the thing. These things were gleaned from the fields, from the soil or from holes dug in the earth. Historically, wealth was earned and indeed created by the raw materials derived from agriculture and mining. Duh, you say?... Well that is the point. We're recovering from a surreal situation - a situation in which wealth had literally been created out of thin air. It never really existed, yet now that it's gone, we're devastated. Please stop for a moment to recognize that, out of all the animals on this planet, only we humans are intelligent enough to comprehend this.

This year's newsletter carries a strong economic theme. Honestly, it feels silly talking about omega-3's and other "self" centered concerns when so many big-picture elements need fixing. The neat thing with sustainable farming is that, the fixing is done irregardless of one's motivation. We can have it all - self and society - by reinventing our economy out of thousands of micro-economies, each representing interconnecting rings of influence. Yes, this smacks of idealism - which is exactly what we need right now. The realism of the idealism - the irony of our dilemma - is that we, as individuals, possess the power of inertia which is necessary to create change. Yet this becomes our panacea only when there's enough of us thinking and acting this way as to create a groundswell of momentum for others to follow.

"Do what you can... With what you have... Where you are... In the time that you have."

We can produce delicious life-sustaining food... With sustainably fertilized soils and locally-produced energy... Anywhere there is a sunrise... Any time there is sunshine or wind blowing. Producing food and energy in this manner is an incorruptible investment in life itself. If we've said it a hundred times, we'll say it again: Thank you for supporting **your** local sustainable farm. This would not be possible without you!

Solar Harvest Farm - The Local Stimulus Package, Unapologetically Laden With Pork



2008 Highs 'n Lows The flooding is now old news. Even after all that water in June, August was dry enough to really slump the growth curve. Stacked up against other years, the 2008 growing season will not be remembered as favorable to man nor beast. The best news of the season was strong customer demand. Everything sold early enough in the season that we didn't have to invest time and resources into mid-summer marketing. This was incredibly helpful as we could focus on the livestock rather than the telephone and computer.

2009 Crystal Ball Like everyone else, we really don't know what to expect. If folks choose to de-prioritize food, the farm might be overstocked. Due to many variables, our stocking rates are committed long before the spring orders. The next crop of calves for example, are typically grazing our fall pastures only shortly after the previous group leaves in your coolers. If sustainably-raised food remains a priority, we'll continue investing in the farm. We've long been prioritizing function over form. While eye-appeal may do little in helping us manage the farm, I'm afraid the lack thereof can create the perception of a less-than-healthy business. Therefore, the old dairy barn is finally going to get it's first paint job in perhaps a century! The old girl has been receiving lots of TLC lately. She should soon be ready for her second tour of 120 years. You've also read in previous newsletters of our dire need for a machine shed. If we get a warm-and-fuzzy from incoming spring orders, we hope to proceed with this. The Quonset hut type of building you'll see north of the pond was added in late December. The severe and sudden start of sub zero windy days pushed this decision to the front burner as the wind was stripping heat and weight from the cattle.

Every once in a while, someone asks if we're still planning on fish farming. Yes, it's still on the "to do" list, but it comes with a great deal of capital expense and bureaucratic baggage. I'll have to develop an alternative concept as the methods being promoted are riddled with issues identical to confinements - toxicity due to high concentrations of fish manure, pharmaceuticals etc. After writing this, I can't help but now recognize why I haven't implemented this project! In light of the bureaucracy and fish manure dilemma, it appears I've finally succumbed to the very thing one is admonished never to do... *I've let the bass turds wear me down.*



Solar-Powered Farming *The Integration of Organic Agriculture with Organic Energy.* Formerly perceived as an ideological virtue, the potential for solar and wind power on the farm is finally being recognized in the mainstream. I have been invited to speak about this potential at the Weston A Price Foundation's National Convention in Schaumburg IL in November. The fact that this is now a topic worthy of taking valuable space on a national-level itinerary signals that minds are opening. This subject, the very impetus for the creation of our farm, remains, in my assessment, as THE pivotal element of our time. It is indeed because of solar and wind power, that our farm has been able to survive through our "growing pains".

Most people who are drawn to organic pasture-based agriculture do so because the farm methods are designed to alleviate issues known to be harmful and non-sustainable. Yet even though conventional oil use and electrical power production impose greater hazards upon society at large, the organic farming standards are devoid of any reference to the subject. Farms certified as organic are unfettered and unmeasured in their consumption of dirty, non-sustainable, non-organic energy. Yet, organic farms represent the ideal forum to implement and showcase the potential of organic energy - this because the technology is readily adapted to their land, their farms are decentralized and the benefits to the consumer and society are lockstep with the core principles of organic farming.

The Solar Idealism/Realism Perspective There are really only two kinds of people in the world - those who drive stick-shift - and those who think they can't drive stick-shift. Stick-shifters take this for granted. Some may have adapted to stick for sport or economy whereas other *more experienced* drivers learned simply because nobody had invented the automatic yet! Regardless of how or why someone learned, they bang through those gears - upshifting, downshifting - and yes, the dreaded "uphill-from-a-dead-stop-when-there's-a-bozo-on-ner-backbumper" maneuver - all in subconscious autopilot mode. This is very intimidating to those who think they can't drive stick. It's clearly a perspective based on which seat you're sitting in. Equally clear is the fact that anybody, (okay - almost anybody) can learn to drive stick given a patient teacher, a large unobstructed parking lot (and perhaps \$500 in escrow to replace a burnt clutch).

In this light, the same can be said regarding the local production of solar and wind energy. From the perspective of someone who is already over the intimidation, the motions are "autopilot easy". Understandably, many people sitting in the other seat remain intimidated. It is at this point that a large percentage of society, sitting in that metaphorical passenger seat, confuse their feelings of intimidation with thoughts of idealism.



Our alternative energy journey began in 1991. Since that time, we've "burnt a few clutches". Yet now, the process is pretty much in the autopilot mode. The popular consensus that solar energy is futuristic idealism - that it is only capable of contributing meagerly at exorbitant cost - is an inaccurate and unfortunate matter of perspective. I continue to listen to highly credentialed, articulate individuals who state that what we are doing is not practical. It is enlightening to recognize that, even though an "expert" possesses an advanced command of the language, aggressively concise in driving their opinions home, - even though these highly skilled debaters can bury their opponents in their verbal dust - this verbal success does not demonstrate that they are always right. They just happen to be really good talkers!

If the good ole economy doesn't stymie the orders, we plan on expanding our current solar power system this year. Items on the docket include photovoltaic-direct DC water pumping, (one of our biggest loads - but currently pumped via AC PV) and additional PV panels. The old PV rack will be rebuilt, (used improper materials the first time - one of the "burnt clutches"). I'd also like to implement a large scale rainwater collection system to be used for late summer irrigation.

Butcher Shops One of the single most important element threatening the future of Mom & Pop direct market farming remains with the fate of the remaining Mom & Pop butcher shops. I don't pretend to know all the reasons as to what is going on behind the scenes, but I can readily observe the effects. Demand is exceeding capacity. This is one of those types of businesses that doesn't take kindly to simply adding an off-shift foreman and crew to handle the extra work. It seems that as soon as Mom or Pop isn't on the scene, the quality issues soon surface - on the customers stovetop or grill. The invisible barrier creating this reluctance to expand to meet demand is exasperated by market conditions which force the butcher shops to pay substandard, non-sustainable wages. Hence the propensity towards immigrant labor appears imperative to avoiding financial loss. This is just one of the myriad of elements brought about by our society - a society which remains discriminantly intolerant of allowing food pricing to rise in concert with other normal cost-of-living increases. If this trend is not reversed soon, the farm-to-consumer path will become bottlenecked and congested to the point of impracticality. As the surviving butcher shops divert overflow business via price increases, the remaining clientele will be comprised of an increasingly larger percentage of hobbyists. These hobbyists raise their livestock either for sale or show with farm infrastructure subsidized by off-farm income.

In The News

Caged Hens Happier Than Free-Range

Comments based on an article in Agriview, Jan 8, 2009.

In the true spirit of *seeing what one believes* rather than *believing what one sees*, the recent California referendum regarding caged chickens has induced some interesting "scientific research". The trade group United Egg Producers, representing conventional battery cage confinement layers, is promoting a recent study claiming that caged birds are happier than free-ranged. The "science" backing this claim is centered on the measurement of stress hormones. They state that free-range hens deal with pressures that hens in modern cages do not. Researchers say that hens in modern cages are protected from predators whereas free-range hens are "constantly in fear of attack". Furthermore, the modern cage system is said to protect the hens from manure-borne diseases and parasites that affect free-range hens. The researchers stipulate that modern cages help prevent infection and spread of the avian influenza virus which can affect birds raised outdoors. The UEP further states that separate research studies show that hens raised in conventional cages tend to have fewer diseases and live longer.



We can use this news article as a sort of microcosm of the centralized vs decentralized debate. To be clear, the UEP is using this study to defend their industry's conventional practice of forcing two hens to live out their entire lives on the same space as this page. The cages, each containing 6-8 hens, comprise a stacked "battery" of cages allowing floor to ceiling utilization. Stocking densities of a million birds per building are not uncommon. The birds-per-building efficiency ratio is so critical in this high volume low margin market that, in order for birds to stand, their heads must protrude through the cage ceilings. Clearly this study personifies the admittedly cynical yet very real element of "science" which is justified by capitulating towards a self-serving, predetermined result.

Ah, but there's much more than that which meets the eye, for the magicians cloak has caused us to divert our gaze. For the sake of argument, let's pretend that a caged hen is happier because it doesn't have to worry about lions and tigers and hawks, (oh my) and that hens free-ranging in a field, scratching for seeds and chasing down June-bugs, would be much happier if they were indoors, packed like sardines in cages rather than face the wrath of the mighty chicken hawk. If we swallow this bait, we've failed to recognize a critical piece of reality: "Free-range" chickens are not raised outdoors.

Of course, if the "free-range" egg producers, (includes literally every name brand natural or certified organic supermarket/health food supplier) were to refute this "science" their primary defense would expose the deception upon which they themselves market their product. I can see the headline: UEP Science Flawed - "Free-range" Hens Never Actually Free-Ranged. My, my, my... Such a conundrum they have gotten themselves into! :)

Down... and Out

Some of you local folks may have noticed the dead cow that was abandoned in the parking lot of the public lands a bit south of us back in February. She lie there for days - 1500 lbs of Holstein - catching the attention of all who drove by with her bloating belly and feet contorted in the air. Intolerable as it was, this act represents the emerging tip of a paradigm-busting iceberg. The culmination of decades of concentration and industrialization has left us with myopic regulations, effectively stifling all common sense and commerce which does not reward the industrial paradigm.



It took a lot of work and risk for someone to abandon that cow there. Before industrialization, that downed cow may have been put in the farmers own freezer. More than likely, the local rendering company would have traveled 20 miles or less to pick it up, paying the farmer for the privilege - all with a simple phone call from the farm. Yet with industrialization, we've driven our cows "Mad" with disease or injected them with so many medications as to render the carcass unfit even for the dogs. Which element drove this farmer to unload her in a hunting preserve parking lot in the dead of the night is unknown. Was it the inability to schedule a short notice opening at any butcher within 50 miles while she was still walking (and not classified as a "downer")? Was it outside of the range that the few remaining rendering companies were willing to travel? Did she go down within the withholding time of the medications she may have been on effectively rendering her unfit for consumption? Or was it the new rule stipulating that bovines over 30 months of age must have the brain, spinal chord and small intestine removed?Look what we've done to a process as old as life itself.

NAIS Update (National Animal Identification System) This Federal-State-Industry tag team continues to advance openly and in the peripheral, with taxpayer funding no less - this even amidst the backdrop of trillion dollar deficits. Wisconsin, through its Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, (WLIC) remains as the fair-haired-boy in the Federal-State promulgation, this via the recent appointment of Robert Fourdraine as vice chairman of the National Institute of Animal Agriculture, (NIAA). Mr. Fourdraine continues as chief operating officer of WLIC. The member lists of the WLIC and NIAA represent but one paradigm - centralized, high concentration, industrialized agriculture. The NAIS is driven quite literally by a consortium of businesses given free reign to establish policy that is in the best interests of their shareholders. Perhaps we have all seen enough of these corporate free-for-alls in the past few months that the public will soon stomp this out? If these corporations obtain their desired result, (and they have deep pockets to fortify their mission statements) your choices at the meat case will be derived exclusively from confinement sources. Because the non-farm public has remained silent, NAIS is advancing. The noise from the few remaining farmers is simply not loud enough. Please call or email your state & federal reps!

WDATCP Pursues Enforcement Against Amish Farmer who failed to register his livestock premises. The WI Dept of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection plans to impose a \$5000 fine upon the farmer. (Wisconsin State Farmer - Jan 9, 2009)

Ohio Dept of Ag Forcefully Enters Farm Home - Guns Drawn.



Officers held the John and Jacqueline Stowers family captive - including 10 children who had been in the middle of a home schooling lesson - for six hours. The Stowers operate an organic food cooperative. The ODA seized the family's personal food supply, cell phones and personal computers. The crime the Stowers are alleged to have committed is in association with licensing to sell food within their organic food cooperative. (Agriview - Dec 1, 2008)

I don't know the Stowers nor know of anyone in this area that does. Consequently, when reading a story such as above, we must rely on our own intuition to fill in the blanks. Maybe there were extenuating circumstances beyond the issue of selling food. Then again, if similar circumstances were to occur here at our farm, these same thoughts could, and likely would be thought of by someone who did not know us. We do after all, process chickens here at the farm. Wisconsin law limits the quantity of chickens that can be processed on the farm and sold exclusively to the end user. (It would be illegal to sell these chickens wholesale to a store for resale). The Wisconsin on-farm exemption from state inspection is limited to 1000 birds - among the lowest in the country. (Some states allow 20,000 without third party inspection.) Obviously this small quantity acts as the limiting attribute in evaluating the potential of pastured poultry as a viable business enterprise. You can do it, but you can't earn a living.

Of course, there is the mind set out there that responds to this by saying "follow the rules - find a processor - grow the market - co-op with other farmers to create your own licensed processor". The simple fact is that there are few processors within a four hour drive. Building a state approved million dollar facility from the ground up to meet a hypothetical demand would be unpalatable to both business and banker. Yet the fact that we are forced to evaluate such extremes in light of the bigger energy and economic picture demonstrates the degree of myopia inherent to our social processes. Transporting "live"-stock from the farm to a distant, centralized processor, then back again to the point of origin for resale is inherently energy intensive, inflicts unnecessary stress on the animal, encourages exploitation of immigrant labor, greatly increases the potential for food safety concerns as well as removing valuable offal fertilizer from the home farm.

I've worked through each step that would be required if we were to move chicken processing off the farm to the nearest processor. This would require two trips for each batch, adding 200 miles of diesel to each processing date. That's 1400 seasonal miles based on our current status. And we are considered "lucky" to have this processor so "close to home". Yet, the history for this particular processor demonstrates instability. Betting a farm enterprise on an unstable contractor with the next nearest facility over four hours away is an unacceptable risk. And in what way will all of this expended energy, effort and animal stress provide a superior product to you? Who has a greater stake in the success of our family business, Wisconsin's poultry inspector, or the owners of our family business? We're the one's who have to look our customers in the eye with the full confidence of a safe, wholesome product. We're not ignorant as to the criteria necessary to produce a safe product and you're not ignorant as the purchaser of this product. Yet the state responds explicitly to the former and implicitly to the latter. (We're both too stupid to know a safe product, therefore we both need the state to protect us from our own ignorance.) Geez, I see how Libertarian that looks, but regardless of the label we put on it, the end result demonstrates severe over-reach of government. Anyone with their eyes open can see all this for what it is...pure



Wisconsin Hunters Donated More Than 68,000 Deer to numerous Wisconsin food pantry's since 2000, representing more than 3 million pounds of ground venison donated to needy families. (Agriview -Jan 1, 2009)

I'd imagine most of us know a hunter or two. Some hunters are responsible with a knife while others practice the poke, pull and rip method. Each one of these 68,000 deer was field-gutted without state inspection, without stain-

less steel, without concrete floors, without hot water, heck, without any water at all. Nobody knows if Billy-Bob forgot his cervid anatomy and accidentally stuck the knife in the intestines "cuz that was the easiest spot to get muh knife in". Furthermore, nobody knows for sure when the animal was killed, how long it lay before it was dressed or how long before the carcass made it to a cooler - if ever. And of course, then there's the testosterone factor. These are the guys that like to show the world that they killed something. I've already seen carcasses draped across the hood, just inches above the blistering hot turbo diesel lurking beneath. This uninspected meat, all 3 million pounds of it, is sanctioned as fit for consumption by WDNR and WDATCP - as long as it's not **sold**. When inspection criteria are subordinated to financial criteria, all semblance to food safety becomes disingenuous.

I only wish I were making this stuff up. Unfortunately, the political winds are blowing against us. Contaminated beef, peanut butter, melamine etc, all have created a political environment in which any vote against industrial food safety legislation is considered political suicide. Some may view my "news" as cynical muckraking. What many fail to recognize is the major flaw in the yardstick being used to measure food safety. The government yardstick is intolerant and incapable of measuring any process other than large, concentrated industrial processes. Regulations are entirely indifferent and disinterested in any pathogen mitigation improvements derived from non-industrial methods. In regards to both livestock rearing and processing, unquestionably, the attribute of greatest influence involves animal density. In an audacious display of hubris, food safety regulators expect us to believe that either a). Volume has nothing to do with food contamination, or b). High volume is our exclusive option. Yet, throughout other aspects of society, regulations are commensurate to the potential being regulated. We continue to invest in this farm - this with one eye towards progress and the other towards the driveway, awaiting the arrival of the car with state plates. Roll over George Orwell, (and Machiavelli too).

Mad Cows & Mad Vegans

As I overlook the unfolding of the agricultural news of the past year, I can't help but recognize how *maddening* things have become! Seriously, it is interesting to note that ethically-minded omnivores carry an almost identical list of grievances against industrial ag as do vegans. The obvious



exception lies with the unfortunate fact that an increasing number of vegans view the term "ethically-minded omnivore" as an oxymoron. And so many vegans always seem so darn mad! I mean lighten up, huh? It's not like this is an issue new to society. As I've come to understand it, some aboriginal tribes had a direct translation of their word for "vegetarian". Apparently it meant "lousy hunter"...



Alright, so admittedly, telling jokes like this may not help to build bridges, but from what I've seen over the past year, there is little vegan interest in building bridges. In case you haven't noticed, vegan numbers are growing rapidly. While I won't repeat the full page I devoted to this last year, I feel it is an important enough issue to refresh the core concern: The Soil.

Industrial ag has degraded the soil to the status of dirt - inanimate lumps of clay and sand. The greening of the countryside by means of synthetic nitrogen; the "xxxx-icides", (literally "to kill") temporarily allowing the otherwise naturally abhorrent liabilities of high density monocultures to subsist; the anomaly created by the ubiquitous interjection of newly synthesized breeding organisms, their DNA manipulated as perversely as if to procreate fish with tomatoes; the work, all of which has been ascertained not by mankind per se, but rather by corporate decree - all of this is representative of industrial agriculture. It is by these means that the proliferation of human life on Earth has compounded to it's six billion status. The historical limiting factors to the growth of human populations had long been governed by the quality and quantity of the food sources derived from the local countryside. Industrial ag trumped all historical yields, doubling, even quadrupling the harvested pounds per acre. This feat was accomplished by feeding the plant, with total indifference to the soil.

If we don't change, our backs will be against the wall. Agriculture has hung it's hat on one hook. Without cheap oil and natural gas conventional agriculture cannot begin to feed the existing numbers, much less the compounding. Soil biology - microbial animals - will be detrimental in the role of providing

fertility. Just as in the natural world, animal interaction will be mandatory if we are to replace chemical fertility with something sustainable. There's no free lunch. Something has to provide the fertility to produce that lunch. Vegans currently have the choice of eating a chemical, industrial-raised carrot or an organic carrot produced directly or indirectly via animal interaction. As supply and demand push petro-chemicals out of the agricultural market, we will have no choice other than animal fertility. I challenge any vegan to follow the nation's vegetable sources backwards. If they follow it back to seed, they'll find either chemical or animal fertility. The only escape is the home garden with perhaps the help of the chamber pot.

Steppin' Over a Dollar...

Lately, the word "locavore" has been buzzing about in books and articles. While the gist of the original wordsmithing was intent upon describing one who buys and eats local, the psychology beyond this element conveys a much wider message: We've failed to recognize and respond to our own local trade deficits.



Inevitably, if we aren't paying attention, more of our earnings leave our shared locality than we take in. The typical Walmart store need be our lone barometer. While it is true that Walmart bashing has an element of sport to it, the fact remains that due to its immense size, where Walmart goes, others must follow or perish in its mighty wake. In this mighty wake, we see every Walmart wanna-be or hafta-be, competing for the right to drain wealth from our local economies. Be it food or futons, it would be difficult to find even the tiniest percentage of inventory which was grown or manufactured within a thousand miles of the local big-box. This Walmart-Effect - the wake and all its subsequent ripples, effectively and almost imperceptibly degrades our lifestyles. Immediate gratification has warped our sense of reasoning and logic. We'll accept a buy-down of a dime today, ignorant or intolerant to the dollar taken from wages and benefits tomorrow, next month and next year. It is difficult to discern whether people are aware of this erosion of lifestyle induced by the Walmart-Effect or is it simply a case in which the outcome remains someone else's problem? Regardless, the chickens are coming home to roost.

And speaking of chickens, our own experiences personify the effects of this one way trade deficit. The gross sales - the cash flow that ebbs and flows through our farm business - be it for business or personal expense - is predominantly spent in our locality. On the personal side especially, we, like everyone else, must pay for essential local services. It is through these services that we recognize the ever-expanding "dollar per hour" gap. This gap represents the simple fact that for every hour charged by many essential professional services, a "non-professional" patron of these services must work 10 hours. If these were not essential services, we would most certainly forego this enormous disparity. Yet the cumulative effect is leading to a point where one begins to feel indentured - your money or your life. Yet there are few takers of reciprocity within the ranks of this local professional crowd. This 10 to 1 deficit is taken by them and in turn exported out of our/their region - this in our case by-way-of food purchases through mega-stores which source their food from distant markets.

While a person's advanced education must certainly be rewarded with higher pay, the unfortunate consequences of excess lies within the din of that *giant sucking sound* that was presciently spoken of almost twenty years ago. The engine of the economy - the buying power of the huge middle class has eroded to the extent that they can no longer afford to support the exorbitant demands imposed by so many essential professional services. This is akin to the virus which eradicates itself by inadvertently killing its own host.

Heritage Farmers - The Keystone Species of Heritage Breeds

Having spent the first quarter century of my adult life managing manufacturing labor and material costs, the economics of farming continues to fascinate me. Public perceptions range anywhere from "subsidized farm welfare" to "lucrative organic". Regardless of method, it remains abundantly clear that neither extreme is capable of financial sustainability without either subsidy or interplay with off farm income. More to the point, those smaller scale farmers who are achieving "success" are achieving this by a means in which their industrial counterparts can only dream of - employees that work "off the

clock". This is to say that small farm success has been defined by obtaining a yearly income with complete indifference to the aggregate of "man-hours" (gender-neutral) that had been necessary to produce this income. Ask an ole' timer about dollars per hour on the farm and you're likely to be admonished for expecting to be paid for labor. Ask a university extension agent and they'll pull up spreadsheets using \$7-\$12/hr calculations - this, depending upon the task they are measuring (and revealingly, if the task is typically performed by exploited immigrant labor). Anyone can earn the median income by working two shifts. Until farming can earn parity, expressed not as yearly median income, but as dollars per "man-hour" worked, our youth will continue to find greener grass on the industry/services side of the fence. I remain very self-conscious about the self-serving perception of this topic, yet I also recognize that it is almost impossible to see this from any perspective other than the "inside". For those who are truly interested in seeing the sustainable farming baton passed onto the next generation, your own analysis must ask: What \$/hour is reasonable in relation to the risks and skills required?; Are current farm labor cost calculations in step with the industrial/service vocations that compete for our youth?

My assessment is that because a farm is a form of self-employment which like all other businesses must provide its own fringe benefits, the farm must budget their \$/hour rate to be a minimum of \$25/hr. (This would be equivalent to about \$18/hour for the typical employee whose fringes are provided separate from base pay.) Even though this wage is far below the experience/risk/reward assessment of entrepreneurship, it is currently not possible to obtain. Regardless of one's opinion, \$25/hour is a default figure if a family is to keep their heads above water without relying on off-farm income. With this said, plug \$25/hour into the man-hours put into attending a local farmer's market. Even if one person does all the pre-loading, drive to, set-up, market time, teardown, drive home, unload - the man-hour costs alone are \$200. Quite often, there are two people or more assisting with some or all of these tasks potentially pushing the labor costs towards \$400. The cost-to-selling price variance, not the gross sales, must offset this \$200-\$400 labor liability in order for the time to be financially rewarding.

What did we do with the roughly \$130K in gross sales that flowed in last year? I'll list the expenses, high to low. The following expenses do not include the labor costs associated to one full time salary plus four part timers (2600+ man-hours). **Total 2008 Expenses: \$102K.** Feed: \$47.4K. Live-stock: \$24.2K. Depreciation: \$14K. Repairs-Maint: \$4K. Supplies: \$3.8K. Truck Expenses: \$3.5K. (Blown tranny \$2K of this.) Gas-Fuel-Oil: \$1.3K. Farm Insurance: \$1.1K. Phone-LP-Elec: \$890. Farmland Taxes: \$726. Bedding: \$583. Interest: \$119.

The livestock and their feed alone consume 70 cents on the dollar. Depreciation remains high in these early years as the farm is literally being created from a bean field. Besides obvious infrastructure investments, all farm elements bought pre-farm have now been absorbed into the business with one critical exception - the land. The acreage was originally purchased with an expensive, mandated commercial loan. When the house was built, the land and home were merged on the title allowing an economical, traditional mortgage arrangement. Up to this point, there has been little "room" to interject this additional expense onto the farm ledger.

It should be noted that the depreciable assets could only be critiqued as discretionary if our aim was stagnation. If we are to continue to grow towards sustainability, we simply must invest in capital improvements, typically at a \$10K/year level. Previous improvements have already come full circle, providing complete payback. I recognize the propensity for some to judge that our spending might be out of control, (when looking at the totals later in each season, I myself critique the expenditures again for the same reason). While I'm not saying that I haven't put some money into things I now wish I hadn't, the "duds" are totally insignificant relative to the total. If you had the expense reports in front of you then walked out to see what was gained by the expense, I'm certain you'd see the need was genuine. Perhaps a good means of putting our actual expenses in perspective is to simply list the new replacement cost of a few key pieces of equipment. A comparable tractor would cost about \$55K. A heavy-duty pickup capable of pulling in excess of 10 ton would cost \$45K. As you can see, "New Paint Disease" would kill us financially, which is why we use old, previously depreciated equipment.

Hopefully, to this point, you've recognized that I've built a case demonstrating that these expenses are an inescapable cost of doing business on a diversified livestock farm. With over 15 years and several hundred thousand dollars invested, even though our investments have realized a payback, I can readily see that the next depreciation cycle is again knocking at the door. Because I see we can't get ahead of this, I'm cryin' "Uncle". We can not "cost improve" our way out of the burden of indirect expenses. We both recognize the impasse we are now at, especially in light of the economy. The prices farmers receive must rise in order to reach parity while at the same time, the prices many consumers are able or willing to pay must settle or subside if many are to sustain their households. This is the consequence of the Faustian bargain society made after WWII.

I have a series of spreadsheets for each product line which are all linked together allowing me to evaluate the overall impacts of time, materials, weights etc. This allows me to plug in "what if" values. For example, "what if" the net earnings allowed a \$25/hr return to pay for wages and fringes - what would the price per pound have to be for each respective product line to carry it's own weight? The answers: Grassfed Beef - \$4.90/lb; Pork - \$3.60/lb; Pastured Chicken - \$3.54/lb; Pastured Eggs - \$6.79/dz. Relax. If you haven't already looked at the price sheet, we haven't moved to these prices because they are obviously impossible to obtain. Recognize that the parity price for chicken is the closest to what we have been receiving. The reason should be obvious - our family performs the processing. We don't need diesel power to transport. We don't have to provide a profit margin to a separate business. In contrast to the beef which requires brute force in conjunction with almost \$300 per head in processing costs. Even though the Ma & Pa butcher shops don't appear to be getting rich, their per head charges for work performed over a 3-5 day period greatly exceed our per head earning which were accrued over 540- 800 days of risk - our risks being with living creatures! Do you now you see why these farm economics are so fascinating!? Doesn't this just leave you dumfounded?!!! I mean, why would anybody be foolish enough to get involved with the farm-end of the beefstick? Because small-scale beef raising is dominated by hobbyists, the armchair psychologist in me has a philosophy about this:

While there certainly are plenty of women involved in farming, most beef operations appear to be run by men. ("Say no more" the ladies say, "that pretty well explains why it ain't makin' no money"! Men can be strange creatures after all. (No - it's true!) Some get all weird when they stand next to pickup trucks, double axle stock trailers and big lunkin bulls that watch'em out of the corner of their eye. It's that same glazed-over look that Tim-the-Toolman gets when he picks up a 20 volt Lithium powered cordless drill packing 350 in-lbs of knuckle-bustin', arm-twistin' torque - all semblance of intelligence seems to get sapped right through the trigger finger. Ya, I suspect it's a testosterone imbalance of sorts in which the world would probably be a whole lot better off if it were treated! But just the same, there's a whole lotta part-time beef guys out there spending their days makin' \$50K a year in town just so they can dump 20 of that into their part-time farm addiction. As an effective tax shelter, Uncle Sam pays 'em back 25%.

Our ability to stay in farming will last as long as I'm willing to invest my salary into the farm, (not the *profits* as there are none until payroll is met).

Micro/Macro

Amidst a sea of humanity in SE WI and NE IL exists a microscopically small number of farms intent upon providing local foods to local people. While I haven't researched the actual ratio, I would venture to guess that, of the acres presently being farmed, hardly 1 in 10,000 is devoted to the direct feeding of local people. Whereas this hypothetical 1 acre is locally interactive, the remaining 9,999 acres are diesel-ed-out - "out" now being represented by a small consortium of corporate agricultural interests. Of course, it will be diesel-ed-back, this through an amazing distribution network in which *efficiency* is inversely proportional to the market price for a barrel of crude. Above all, after having purchased the raw materials from locals for below the actual cost of production, (yes - this is the effect of subsidies to farmers) these products will reenter the locality refined, processed, fortified, pasteurized, homogenized, chemically sanitized, government sanctified and gratuitously expensified. *The cha-ching making the food industry sing* is captured and controlled by the processors and their distribution network.

Shooting from the hip... Within the Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Rockford macro lives perhaps 10 million people in say, 2.5 million households. It is interesting to recognize how many of these 2.5 million households are ob-

taining their protein needs from a local farm. We'd need to work with a few assumptions to extract this: a). Each household obtains all their yearly needs of meats and eggs from one diversified farm. b). Household size: 4 c). Yearly pastured protein consumption: Grassfed beef - Half; Pork - Whole; Pastured Chicken - 52; Eggs - 8dz/month. The take-home quantity of meats from this list would equate to about 1-½ lbs per day. Based on this level of consumption, our farm is currently feeding about 55 of the 2.5 million hypothetical households found in this 100 mile radius, or .002%.

This exercise vindicates the exorbitant marketing costs (mostly labor hours) demanded from direct market farms. We are searching for the 1 household in 50,000, (.002%) which is committed to buying a local product. This exposes the difficulty that many farms experience when they do not have a cosmopolitan-sized market within a 1 to 1-½ hour drive. Based on our experience, I doubt that the Milwaukee metro area alone could sustain our present need of 55 households - this said based on the large percentage of patrons who originate from the northern Chicago communities. And yet I've left out a critical element: If we are to aspire to a parity income without raising prices, we must increase livestock numbers significantly, creating the need to find 25 additional hypothetical households. Using the above assumptions, we would need to winnow through more than a million new households to find these 25. Please don't misunderstand - we have over a thousand people on our mailing list who have either done business with us or expressed interest. About 300 are active at any one time whereas 150 or so purchase a reasonable percentage of their yearly needs. (To clarify, this is to say that it takes 150-300 people to order what could be consumed by the 55 households who hypothetically would purchase all of their yearly proteins here.) Internal to these 150 customers exists the movers and shakers of the local food movement. These people are the "go to" people whom many others literally depend upon to coordinate a cooperative of sorts. By assuming the lead role in coordinating a group pickup and delivery of product, these "go-to" people single-handedly induce a groundswell of interest. Without them, the customers active on the list would drop substantially. What scares me is that I can count the number of "go-to" people on one hand yet the inertia these few people create is at least as important as the local farms themselves. Even though we all read that that the organic industry is growing by leaps and bounds. Far too much of this growth is corporate - thus subjected to the assets and liabilities of our free-market economy.



Almost, But Not Quite Fatal

It was Winston Churchill who once said "Democracy is the worst form of government... except for all the others". Throwing the baby out with the bath water has yet to produce anything better. Yet, to Churchill's point, the bath water can get really messy. To speak of our form of democracy without speaking of capitalism is like speaking of Laurel without Hardy. An unfortunate effect of our market-driven economy is the benchmark of fatality - fatality not strictly in the metabolic context, but certainly in the theoretical context. Our enquiring and ever competitive minds appear incapable of tolerating any process in which we haven't yet demonstrated fatality, then backed off to be almost, but not quite fatal. Once someone has defined this line of fatality, the "almost" zone becomes the sweet spot for everyone to gravitate towards with survival instincts, desperation, stupidity, hubris and of course greed causing many to overreach into the zone of fatality. Market forces have been pushing sustainably-designed farms towards this zone. One need only witness the internecine conflicts within the Organic/Pasture/Grassfed organizations to reveal this reality. If we continue to allow these icons to become centralized and corporatized, we will again find ourselves distanced - locked out - thus allowing others an avenue to exploit our ignorance with false perceptions. A clean sheet of paper has now been forced upon us. **Carpe diem!**



“Market-Driven” Sustainable Food & Energy - An Oxymoron?

Yes - If we continue with business as usual. No - If we come to grips with why “democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others”. In light of recent events, it’s easy to blame greed as the nemesis of the free-market. Yet if you think about it, greed needs a conduit in which to produce the effect. Furthermore, what one person views as greed, another may view as just reward earned via risk and innovation. After all, personal motivation and commensurate gain is the hallmark of our free-market democracy. I’m afraid that because greed is a value judgment imposed upon a scale that goes from zero to infinity, we won’t get to the root of it by attacking greed alone.

Rachel Carson, in *Silent Spring* wrote: “*We live in an era of specialists, each of whom sees his own problem, and is unaware or intolerant to the larger picture in which it fits*”. Please read that again to soak it in. The irrefutable accuracy of this observation exposes THE foundational nemesis by which all other laissez-faire liabilities are produced. Self-interest is not always in concert with the essential, sustainable needs of the free society in which this very self-interest is dependant. Whereas some of these conflicts may be superficial or philosophical, others blatantly and openly create financial gain/savings for the direct producer and consumer, respectively, while at the same instant, imposing substantial financial costs onto society.

WYSIWYG Our farm provides visible evidence that *what you see is what you get* - this being especially true if one makes comparisons to tangible conventional elements directly visible in our locale. If you drive up from the south for example, you’ll notice how badly damaged our class B town road is on the east side especially. Every ten days or so, 300 tons of sand are die-seled out of local pits then trucked up our road to the local CAFO, every 45 minutes from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm. The east lane, being the side bearing the loaded 50 ton GVW per trip, has tipped the road noticeably. The hundreds of thousands of dollars required to fix this road is assessed directly to local taxpayers effectively creating a 10 mile long town-subsidized farm lane-way for the CAFO. Go to the EWG.org website and witness the hundreds of thousands of dollars of subsidies required to keep this CAFO operating. Witness the immigrant labor at CAFO’s which are exploited by industrial ag so as to appease low-price consumers - many of these same consumers aggressively promoting anti-immigration legislation seemingly unaware of the H2a program or the impact that immigrant labor - legal or illegal - has in keeping food prices and quality in their favored almost but not quite fatal zone.

In contrast, our sustainable farm is designed to mitigate if not outright eliminate the expected consequences typically associated with animal agriculture. Perennial forages directly replace the tremendous amount of energy required to plant, maintain and harvest grain for bovines. Our livestock density is proportional to the soil’s holding capacity. Soil organic matter and biology are managed and improved allowing greater water and nutrient holding capabilities thus eliminating runoff and non-point pollution. Because the livestock harvest a respectable percentage of their own feed, spread much of their own manure and do so in a managed, nomadic fashion, we require only a fraction of the diesel fuel for these tasks and no diesel for mined sand bedding. A farm powered by animals, people and the added bonus of solar/wind energy not only eliminates these burdens from society, but also produces healthier livestock, farmers and consumers of the farm’s livestock. Because we do not operate conventionally, we do not receive subsidies. WYSIWYG. What you can’t see - the omega-3’s and CLA - higher vitamin content - pathogens eliminated - only serves to sweeten the fact that our free-market self interests do not burden the very society in which we depend upon.

If we have learned anything from the events of recent times, I hope we’ve recognized the hazards created when there is no transparency as well as the risks associated with putting all of our eggs in one basket. This trans-

lates to an economy which provides consumers with direct local access to diversified, decentralized local farms of food, fiber and energy. As you have seen from viewing our financial data, we have a long road ahead of us. The post WWII industrialization of agriculture has left farm prices right where they lay in 1950. If sustainable farms are to avoid being pushed into the almost but not quite fatal zone, we must recognize and come to terms with the small farm’s perceived weakness. From the perspective of both industrialization and the market forces that had spurned industrial “efficiencies”, the small farm’s liabilities lies with it’s high indirect costs in proportion to it’s volume. Quite simply, economies of scale allow similar expenses to be spread across exponentially higher volumes of livestock. One does not need an MBA to recognize this most obvious fact. Perhaps if the MBA also had a masters in biology, we might never have reached this nadir. It’s anybody’s guess as to whether or not small farm’s can avoid being pushed into this fatal zone. What remains clear is that, even in the midst of a recession, consumer spending still favors non-essentials over essentials - gadgets over groceries. Within the grocery decisions lies an ideology which justifies \$5/lb for snack foods as acceptable whereas \$4/lb for nutritious pastured proteins is considered a ripoff.



Are We There Yet? As I scan the topics I’ve published in this year’s newsletter, I see that I’ve painted a picture of a rough and bumpy journey. This has certainly been the most difficult newsletter I’ve written yet. It would have been easier to stick to the “warm and fuzzies” and perhaps I will regret having taken this route. But I chose these topics because they represent the foundations of sustainability which are rarely spoken of. I’m concerned with the perceptions that I suspect many people have - that because farms such as ours charge more than the store, we must then have high margins. Most importantly, the fact that virtually all the farm family’s I’ve met or read of are earning their income by throwing as many labor hours at the task as is necessary often with the added dependency of a spouse working off farm.

Industry and service jobs typically budget 2000 man-hours per year per employee. The aggregate farm hours required of our present mix of diversity and volume conservatively totals 2600 hours. Adding more livestock will increase income but also add more expense and labor effectively leaving us chasing our tail. From our experience as a diversified direct-market livestock farm, it is currently not possible to earn a parity income from farming.

So Now What? Well, if I were cryin’ Uncle a year or two ago, maybe I’d have considered picking up my ball and bat and going “home” by refreshing my resume and reentering the manufacturing world. The fringe benefits were pretty sweet. But that’s just talk designed to blow off some steam. Even if the job market was still favorable, I’d still want to work this farm through to fruition (and of course the 15 years of time and materials adds a bit of pressure to do so). Still, I have to force myself not to look at the opportunity cost associated with farming. Since leaving the corporate world, the effects of many accumulated years of lost opportunity has aggregated to represent several hundred thousand dollars that would have been earned with less hours and risk. Regardless of the farm’s inability to provide a respectable salary, it’s operating expenses remain free and clear of off-farm income. In other words, we’re not using Michelle’s off-farm income to finance any aspect of the farm business. Her income fills the gap required to pay family living expenses. Most importantly, her income provides health insurance, 401K contributions and numerous other fringe benefits - a \$14K fringe package that the farm cannot cough up.

By conventional standards, we should not be able to be weathering this financial shortfall - and we wouldn’t be if not for one critical philosophy - “avoided costs”. The prepaid solar aspects designed into our personal and farm expense budgets are providing regular payback by cost avoidance that would otherwise cripple us. Additionally, I recognize that there was an embodied expense associated with “going to work” that no longer exists when working

from home. Because I'm not depreciating a vehicle 10,000 miles a year just for work and I'm not nickel and diming cafeteria coffee, snacks and lunch, we're avoiding a \$5000/year expense that used to be buried in daily life. We also do not have annual vacation expenses effectively saving a few more thousand a year. While it's true that some of our survival success is due to deprivation, most of the "stuff" typified in modern life I find to be frivolous and non-rewarding in the long term. (Wish me luck in convincing the rest of the family!) While I may be guilty of rationalizing when I say this, my current life philosophy is centered around the infamous pursuit of happiness. I suspect that most of us would be much happier with an income which simply provided for basic needs if the job commitment allowed for greater flexibility and time for family, friends and self. It seems like, no matter how much a person makes, it's never quite enough to cover expenses. As a result, we live and breath in the almost, but not quite fatal zone of existence. When in this zone, aside from the "high" associated with buying "stuff" which provides only short term gratification before more stuff is needed, true happiness remains ever-elusive.

I suspect that the romance oft associated with small farms had much more to do with social connections than the actual work of farming. Contrary to popular modern consensus, there are few romantic elements associated with the physical work of farming. If I had a dollar for every time someone admonished me for not recognizing all the beauty around me, well, I'd have a few extra dollars anyway! Forgive me, but I need to be frank here for just a moment! Farm work often sucks - especially the old-school ways! One tour of duty at the top of the elevator on a typical 90 degree hay day, inside the barn, away from even the slightest breeze, with your head just a few feet away from steaming hot barn roof - the chaff falling off the elevator and down your shirt - the dust inhaled deeper and deeper into your lungs as you run atop the stack, a 50 lb bale in each arm - staying ahead of the elevator so you can unload the next wagon before the hay that's still laying in the field gets rained on - where's the romance in that?! Heck, all the evidence on my body reflects that it would

cripple me if I didn't modernize. But...the opportunity to work a flexible schedule which is centered around and with family - there lies the true romantic element.

How Can We Get "There"? Firstly, instead of dealing with the conventional *almost but not quite fatal* zone, concerned consumers would do well to recognize the *almost but not quite sustainable* zone, then stay clear of it. We'll know we're in the fatal zone if the market forces farms to raise more animals than the land can assimilate. This won't pass the "smell test" and it will be evident that we'd come full circle to that which we were intent upon changing.

Secondly, realizing now that either farm prices must rise or farm expenses decrease, consumers hold the keys to unlocking a major cost savings on the farm. Currently, the indirect labor hours associated with finding customers to match farm output represents a significant expense. Unquestionably, the inconvenience associated with picking up product at the farm is the single greatest impediment. The rapid rise of corporate organic sales reveals that there are many, many more households than the 1 in 50,000 spoken of earlier. Virtually every one of these corporate organic buyers recognizes the local products as superior, yet succumb to the conveniences offered in one-stop shopping. By buddying-up with others, this inconvenience becomes an economy of scale. Neat irony in that the economy-of-scale advantage recognized when many consumers co-op can help prevent the disadvantages realized when economy-of-scale is imposed upon the farm! These cooperatives between family, friends and neighbors could be rotated amongst members, or members could agree to adequately reimburse the active member. Whereas we've found that we cannot afford to delivery groceries for free, so too is the case for whomever agrees to do this leg work. If someone, be it the farmer or the co-op member, saves someone else two hours of time at their own expense, they must be rewarded for their time or they won't be able or willing to continue.

Historically speaking, we humans have demonstrated predictable behavior - a cycle of sorts revealing our collective state-of-being. This cycle observes us moving from **bondage** to **spiritual faith** to **liberty** to **abundance** to **selfishness** to **complacency** then back to **bondage**. The simple fact that we've extracted this pattern from our past provides the hope that we are not necessarily doomed to repeat it!

As our present economy has revealed - the bigger they are, the more collateral damage they create when they fall. The benefits that corporations have precipitated upon humanity are indeed numerous. Yet this yardstick alone dodges the fact that corporations, as we've allowed them to become, are faceless, non-human entities that exist for the sole purpose of providing value to **their** shareholders. They are indeed selfish. They need not exhibit loyalty to region, country, nor natural world. We can't simply agree to disagree about this - for this level of selfishness is incompatible with being human - incompatible with *The Golden Rule*.

One look at a freeway interchange reveals the level to which we've sold-out to the corporate franchise. The franchise creates familiarity regardless of location whereas the Mom & Pop business represents an unknown - a potential risk that we *might* not like. How mundane - and more to the point - how devastating to the well-being of local people! How likely is it that our franchise visit next year will reveal the same faces? People come and go through these franchises because the employment does not provide a living wage. Aside from local tax income, the real wealth is extracted from the local community - exported via armored trucks staffed by \$10/hr corporate security "associates". Like conquistadors to kings, regional managers place this locally-derived wealth before the feet of the corporate board who respond with indifference to the region from which it was extracted. Cynicism has indeed become the new reality to which we can choose to remain complacent or proactively display our disapproval by promoting change.



Of all the businesses that flirt with the fatal zone, few can compare to the corporations which hold a monopoly on livestock feedlots and slaughter plants. If the details of these processes were transparent to the public, these corporations would collapse tomorrow. Transparency would shatter their perceived image of safe food - for just like big corporate banking, the food processing industry is operating in the realm of unbridled risk.

There never has been a better time or reason to *bring it on home!* In regards to raising food in a sustainable, ethical manner, the path which will allow transparency and diversity is the path that you can personally walk on at your favorite local farm. Here exists the vital, sustainable symbiosis between consumer and producer, town and country, your family and mine. Our farm products are tangible things of value - essential things of value - derived from sustainable processes you can personally witness. We're not simply offering you a product - we're offering you peace-of-mind!

One would think that solving worldly problems and obtaining peace-of-mind shouldn't be so obvious nor so easy - but it is. And who'd have thought that something that's supposed to be good for you could taste so good?!

Here's to a good growing season!

Steve Heyer & Family

Solar Harvest Farm
"Putting the Walk into the Talk about Issues that Matter to You"

Pastured Proteins - Why Does it Matter?

Benefits for... **You!**

Essential Fatty Acids Your body can synthesize all of the fats it needs except for two. Unfortunately, the two you cannot create are critical components for proper cell communication. These two essential fatty acids can only be obtained by consuming seafood, flax or pastured proteins. These essential fats are derived from the chloroplasts of algae or grass. Because conventional meats are no longer finished on pasture, these essential fatty acids are absent - yet because this used to be our natural diet, they remain vital to our metabolism!

Nutrition Nutritionally-rich proteins begin with healthy soils. We feed the biological activity in our soils. We don't apply chemicals that will harm soil biology. In addition to the nutritionally-rich forage the livestock consume, our **pigs and chickens are fed certified organic feed**. While the Grassfed cattle do not consume any of this feed, (because they are pasture fed) they are supplemented with the best naturally occurring organic minerals available. This includes Icelandic kelp, Redmond salt, rock mineral and microbials. We endure an appreciable expense above that of conventional synthetic minerals further assuring you of even greater nutritional value.

Antibiotics/Hormone Implants Not used.

Food Safety Our livestock are raised in a diverse, low density, nomadic environment effectively distributing wastes and mitigating pathogens naturally. Our beef cattle are not fed corn, therefore their rumen pH is not acidic. This acid environment, resulting from the unnatural feeding of corn to ruminates, creates favorable conditions for the proliferation of e-coli O1:H57 - the perpetrator behind the news headlines. Research reveals the absence of this harmful strain in grassfed beef. Furthermore, our pork, beef and chicken are processed in small, low volume processing facilities that process less animals in five days than conventional processors speed through in five minutes. The care provided by a small, dedicated family business in conjunction with exponentially smaller processing volumes provides even further protection from pathogen contamination.

Benefits for... **Everybody!**

Locally-raised Your support of **smaller, non-industrialized** farming recirculates income and expenses, stimulating the local economy.

Country of Origin Unlike conventional meats, not only do you know the country our meat was raised in, you also gain the peace-of-mind in knowing the exact farm and family.

Environmentally Sustainable To recognize that we are pasture-powered is synonymous with solar-powered! Our livestock harvest a respectable amount of their own feed, as compared to industrial which are fed and maintained using substantial amounts of diesel and coal. Rotational grazing also eliminates the need to use copious amounts of water as a means to flush manure. The methods associated with raising grassfed beef demonstrates an especially significant improvement over corn fed in that all of their feed is perennial. This eliminates the energy embodied in seasonal tillage, fertilization, weed & pest control and harvest. The carbon sequestration of perennial forage is also exceptional.

The Solar Harvest Farm Exclusive!

Solar and Wind Energy Produced on the Farm! Solar electric, Wind electric, Solar heat, Geothermal heat and Wind aeration - all produced on-site, providing electrical and heating needs of the farm since 1996.

Solar-Powered Grazing + Solar-Powered Energy = The Future of Farming!

Solar Harvest Farm is the place where the rubber meets the road. Where the livestock meet the pasture!

Where energy is produced out of thin air! Where hypotheticals are transformed into reality!

Certainly, there is a time and place for the *talk about issues that matter to you*.

It's only natural to start walkin' when we're all done talkin'!

Thanks to the support of people like you, "We've been able to putt the **WALK** into the issues that matter to you"!



Solar Harvest Farm

Grassfed Beef
Pig-Happy Pork
Pastured Chicken
Pastured Eggs

Steve & Michelle Heyer
Richie, Sheri & Sarah
7432 Marsh Road
Waterford, WI 53185
262-662-5278

solarharvestfarm@yahoo.com

Site-Produced Energy
Rotational Grazing
Biological Soils
Locally-Produced

Established 1993



Solar Harvest Farm

262-662-5278

2009 Harvest Schedule for Pastured Meats

Keep on your refrigerator for future reference!



Pastured Chicken Certified Organic Feed **Price:** \$3.39/lb picked up within scheduled hours. \$3.59 early or late pickup.

Whole chickens typically 4.5-6 lbs dressed available fresh on the dates noted below in green. Here's how to obtain:

- 1). Choose a date in which you will be available to pickup your order.
- 2). Call us to reserve your order.
- 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 often occur at the last minute, feel free to call at any time. Due to folks stocking their freezers for winter, the fall dates usually fill the fastest so please don't procrastinate!

Pastured Eggs Certified Organic Feed **Price:** \$4.50/dz Subscribe or call ahead. (increase effective 6/1/09)

Pig-Happy Pork Certified Organic Feed **Price:** Half Hog \$2.99/lb Downpayment: \$100/half
Whole Hog Special \$2.69/lb*

Grassfed Beef Rotationally-Grazed **Price:** Quarter Beef \$4.19/lb Downpayment: \$100/Qtr
Half/Whole Beef Special \$3.89/lb*

Pork & Beef pricing are based on hanging wt. Processing costs are extra with cost estimates listed on yield page.
Beef in July must be picked up directly at Sorg's Market near Darien. September Beef & Pork are picked up at our farm.
Note: The July beef will be 20-30% heavier than the estimates provided. If you'd like more beef, order from the July harvest!

***Specials:** The volume discounts are available provided that the order, downpayment and cutting instructions are under one name as well as the final payment being received at the time of pickup. Half and Whole beef offers additional savings at the butcher provided that the order is not split up into separate quarters.

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 mineral. (During extreme cold spells, we may supplement with molasses and/or beet pulp - both of which provide added energy without the omega 6 liabilities of corn.) In spring, the beeves are finished on our rotationally-grazed pastures. Mineral consists of Icelantic Kelp, Redmond salt, rock mineral and microbials, all of which are certified organic. We do not use diesel fuel nor toxic insecticides for fly control. Our pastures receive fertility via direct deposit, compost or other biologically acceptable means. Electrical energy is produced on site by **Solar** and **Wind** power!

June	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		Chicken Pickup 4-6pm		Chicken Pickup 4-6pm		Chicken Pickup 1-3pm	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

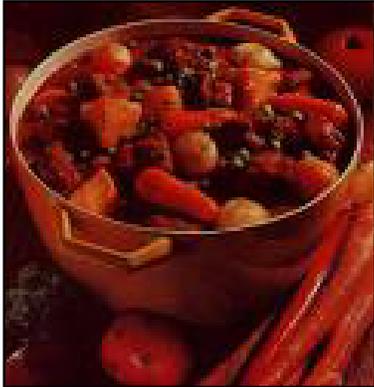
July	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	Beef Pickup - Darien						
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Aug	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						Chicken Pickup 1-3pm	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		Chicken Pickup 4-6pm		Chicken Pickup 4-6pm		Chicken Pickup 1-3pm	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Sept	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						Beef & Pork 10-Noon	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

Oct	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						Pork 10-Noon	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Typical Costs for Half and Whole Pork				2009
Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ To Farm	Processing \$ To Butcher*	Total Cost Estimate
Pork - Half Hog	90 lbs x \$2.99	\$269	\$62	\$331
Pork - Whole Hog	180 lbs x \$2.69	\$484	\$119	\$603
Typical Yield From Half Hog (Double for Whole Hog.)				
Cut	Lbs	<p>Please note that these listings for both pork and beef are but one of many ways the butcher can cut your order. If you have a preference, (and Mother Nature will provide it on the carcass) feel free to discuss your needs with the butcher!</p> <p>Also: Ma Nature provides us with a variety of weights. If you'd like more or less than these "typical" estimates, let us know!</p>		
Ham	16.0			
Shoulder Roast	10.7			
Ground Pork	10.2			
Chops	9.4			
Bacon	6.5			
Loin Roast	5.0			
Pork Hocks w/meat	4.2			
Spare & Baby Back Ribs	3.0			
Neck Bones w/meat	2.5			
Liver (for liversausage)	2.0			

Typical Costs for Quarter and Half Beef				2009
Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ To Farm	Processing \$ To Butcher*	Total Cost Estimate
Grassfed Beef - Quarter	120 lbs x \$4.19	\$503	\$57 / \$73	\$560 / \$576
Grassfed Beef - Half	240 lbs x \$3.89	\$934	\$109 / \$140	\$1043 / \$1074
Typical Yield From Quarter Beef (Double for half beef.)				
Cut	Lbs	<p>Important Note! The listed weights are typical for the September beef harvest. July beef weights (and subsequent costs) will typically be 20-30% higher. If you prefer a greater quantity, reserve your beef from the July harvest.</p> <p>The reason the butcher costs for beef are presented in a low/high value is due to the fact that the July beef are processed at a butcher closer to our area who happens to charge more for their services.</p>		
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	Take Home Weight - Qtr Beef >		90

Sticker shock is only due to the fact that 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 \$700 for a half of beef, \$204 for a half of pork. We 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 and nutrition. 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!

*This includes the fees associated with slaughter, cutting and wrapping, as well as the smoking costs associated with ham and bacon. You will be able to have your order custom cut to your cutting instructions. 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. Double wrap is also available for a relatively small additional cost. (Cost vary slightly at different butchers.)

Please note that as in the past, 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, there are several varieties of sausage available 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 call or email us!

We have raised these animals to provide the finest and purest qualities available anywhere. Many people take their pork trimmings as pure ground pork and make their own sausage patties. It is easy and delicious and best of all, contains no additives other than spices. Penzeys offers many different sausage seasonings. Refer to www.penzeys.com for examples. If you prefer not to have your hams cured, you will receive the "fresh hams" in their pure form. These are pork roasts "to die for" 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 the smoked and cured bacon. If you take the ground pork and fresh hams in their pure 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).

The weights and yields used in these examples are typical. Fall beef quarters can range from 90 - 150 lbs. (July beef 140-190lbs) Pork halves can range from 70 - 130 lbs. The highs and lows are not common, but possible. Much of this depends upon the seasonal growing conditions. Let us know if you prefer more or less than the estimate. We will do our best to match the weight.

Visualizing Freezer Space Required: A typical Quarter beef or half hog is packed tightly into the 12" x 16" x 20" (about 2.5 cubic feet).

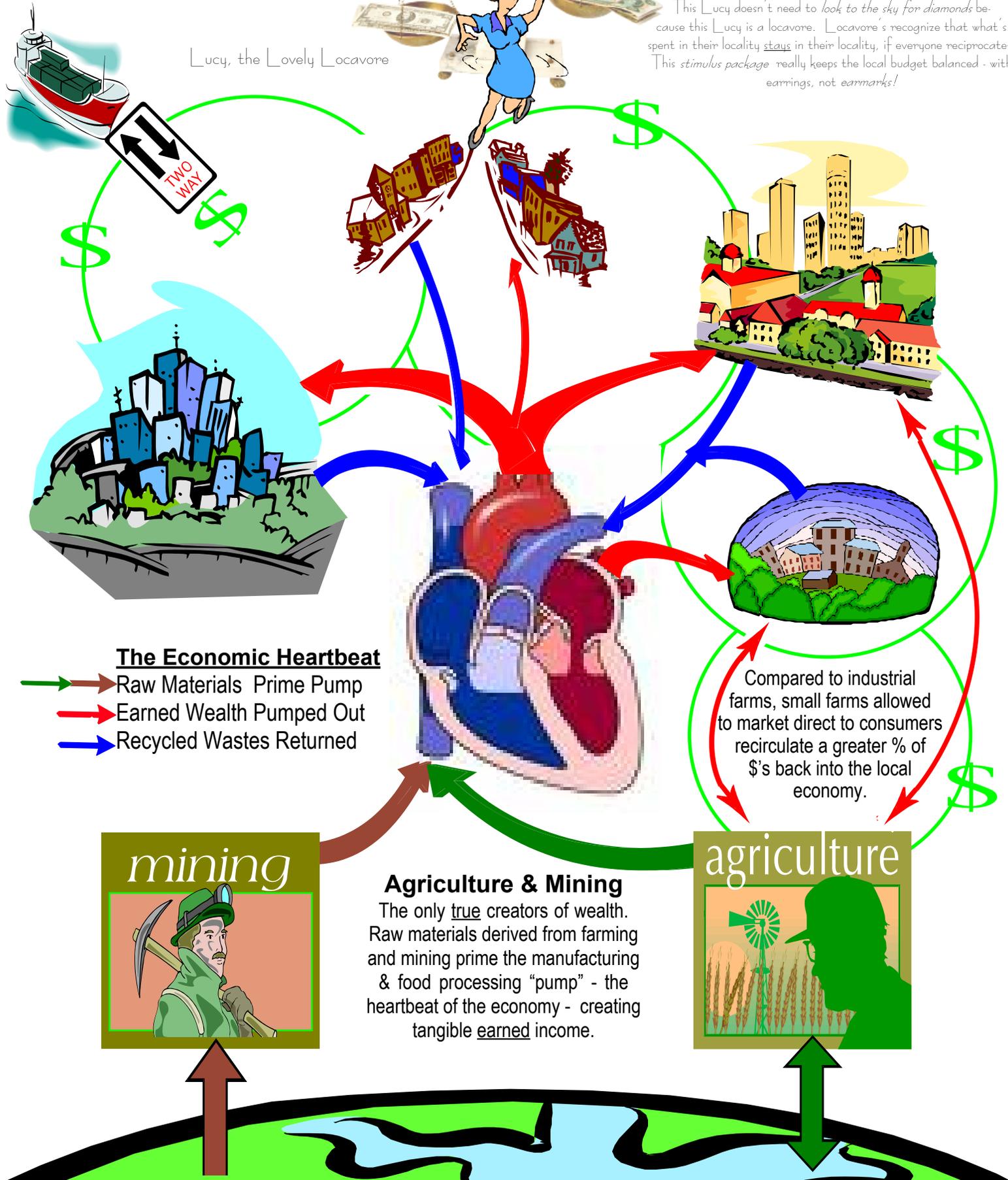
The LOCAVA\$CULAR System

"Come on Baby"

"Do the Localmotion"

Lucy, the Lovely Locavore

This Lucy doesn't need to look to the sky for diamonds because this Lucy is a locavore. Locavore's recognize that what's spent in their locality stays in their locality, if everyone reciprocates. This stimulus package really keeps the local budget balanced - with earnings, not earmarks!



The Economic Heartbeat

- Raw Materials Prime Pump
- Earned Wealth Pumped Out
- Recycled Wastes Returned

Compared to industrial farms, small farms allowed to market direct to consumers recirculate a greater % of \$'s back into the local economy.

mining

Agriculture & Mining

The only true creators of wealth. Raw materials derived from farming and mining prime the manufacturing & food processing "pump" - the heartbeat of the economy - creating tangible earned income.

agriculture