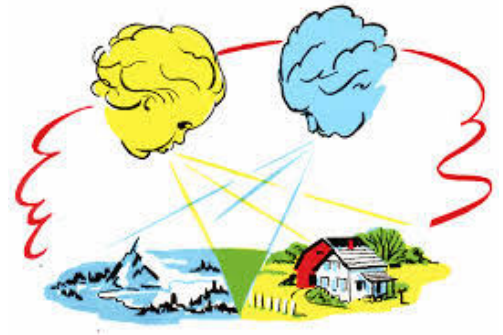


April 28, 2014

Fellow Connoisseurs of Food Raised in Sunshine,

If there's anything good to be gleaned from a harsh winter such as we've all endured, it has to be an increased appreciation for springtime! Let's hope that Mother Nature doesn't decide to hit the Repeat button anytime soon.



It's safe to say that all of us were burdened to one degree or another as we dealt with the effects on our daily routines, our mechanical equipment and the outright abuse imposed upon our own bodies. Likewise for all the inhabitants on the farm to which winter seems to have consumed every ounce of time and energy necessary to maintain even a base-level of body heat. Now behind on so many elements essential to the start of a new season, this year's newsletter has been forced into the back seat. Hence, this newsletter is a bit raw and unedited. Something had to give.

This season represents a very pivotal year for the farm and it's patrons. Lots of changes are converging upon us all at the same time. Much of our initial twenty-year old capital infrastructure is showing signs of full depreciation. Shelters, fence components and our original line of antique farm equipment are in dire need of repair or replacement. Then there's the need to modify the farm's labor requirements as our children begin to head off on their own. Tangled amidst all this, we find that we must also now convert our pastured poultry enterprise into a model which is more conducive to the extremes of weather now prevalent as well as the necessity to reduce the inherent labor associated with pasturing poultry. Last but certainly not least, we are also in the midst of building another grazing operation on the land we purchased two years ago.

But there is a plan to get this all done ... except for that wild card always held by Mother Nature.

For the first time in our farm's existence, we are heavily leveraged with the burden of the new land acquisition. The perpetual wetness of last year greatly diminished the earning potential of the new farm. Back-to-back years would really knock us down. Every storm this season will be a real nail-biter. Putting this into a Las Vegas perspective, this season we will place a \$200,000 bet (our anticipated expenses this season). We will once again stack that pile of chips on Mother Nature, step back, do our job to the best of our ability - and hope for the best.



Weather risks aside, we have several things going for us. We have an exceptionally loyal and rapidly growing customer following. THANK YOU! It is a tremendous benefit knowing that each season, we can focus a greater and greater amount of our time on the needs of the farm rather than the needs of marketing our farm's products. We are also producing more solar and wind energy than ever. This on-site production of renewable energy goes farther than just eliminating the normally overbearing expenses associated with heat and electricity for a farm and farm home. We continue to produce much more than we are using leading to the scenario in which the utility pays us monthly for the solar energy we provide to the grid. With baseline expenses literally extracted out of thin air, (and land payment aside) we are able to better position ourselves to... weather the extremes of... weather.

Many will notice the price increases are a bit steeper than previous years. Most of the rationale for these increases are revealed as you read on. Please recognize that these increases do not create a net increase for the farm, but rather, prevent our income from going backwards. In a nutshell, beef pricing is higher because of the effects this cold winter has had on growth as well as the overall impact on the nation's beef herd resulting in record high feeder calf prices. The sole reason for the pork increase is to cover the doubling of feeder pig prices due to exorbitant losses created by the PED virus. The poultry price has increased due to the almost doubling of time that will be required to raise this new breed of chicken. Eggs however, remain unchanged, and pound for pound, continue to provide the best pastured protein value at roughly \$2.50/lb.

So please read on! These pages include the details associated with the pasture poultry changes as well as an update on the progress of the new 40. You'll also find our usual "In the News" feature. With the high cost of farmland looming over us, I've included a page about farmland prices, one hundred years ago vs today. In my mind, transcending all of this is a page I put together with the hopes of putting our modern hydrocarbon-based lives into perspective. It's a page called "It All Happened On The Beach". This page is an attempt to illustrate how long it took Mother Nature to manufacture our coal, oil and gas vs how long it has taken us to consume virtually all the low hanging fruit.

First and foremost, our vision for this farm is one of sustainability - not just marketing hype lip service - but true to the meaning of the word. We still have our vices. Yet each year we move one step closer towards the ultimate goal of perpetual motion. Yes, the physics teachers tell us that perpetual motion is not possible. Doesn't mean we can't aim for the limits. As a reward, we find ourselves immersed in a local fair trade culture. We don't take more than we can replenish. Carbon is sequestered in the soil. Soil microbes provide our fertility. Sunshine, wind, geothermal and common sense efficiency provide us with renewable energy. Use it or lose it. Process starts fresh the next day. Solar energy gluttons, that's what we are. Not once has anyone ever fouled an ecosystem by spilling sunshine. Not once has one country invaded another to gain control of it's solar resources. We live, love, work and play amidst the most abundant form of energy on our planet. The only reason "they" say "it's not practical" is because "they" can't find a way to control it. And just how cool is that!

Ch-ch-ch-ch-Changes!

Cornish Cross are out. Freedom Rangers are in. Looking at our schedule page reveals the extent to which this will be affecting. Instead of early and late sum-



we will now be raising one group with a two week harvest window in mid summer. While anyone can still split their orders between available dates, (we have the same number of harvest days), the biggest negative will be for those who were splitting due to freezer space. While I will get to the reason why we have made this change in a bit, I will at least now say that we more or less HAD to make this change, or, stop raising pastured chickens. Once we've all made it through this first season, my expectations are that we will all find the change to be agreeable. Of course, it always looks good on paper!

What to expect from Freedom Rangers (FR) compared to Cornish Cross (CC)? First, recognize that in the world of chickens, nothing grows as fast and plump as CC. They are the champion of weight gain and feed conversion. The chicken found in supermarkets are all CC. In a confinement setting they reach market weight in six weeks. Our CC were eight weeks old on pasture. FR's will require 12-14 weeks to reach our goal of a five lb dressed weight (we hope). While FR's are a relative newcomer to the U.S., they have a long track record in France. The reviews on the quality of the meat are all outstanding. As we aim for the same dressed weight as the CC (albeit with 50-75% longer growing time) expect to see a dressed chicken in which the 5 lbs is more evenly proportioned on the carcass.

Why Change? Life exists one day at a time. Yet as we all deal with the needs of each day, out on the horizon we can all sense the trajectory of elements that will inevitably arrive and instigate future changes. We've found ourselves to be entering a turbulent phase for both farm and family. For many years now, increasing concerns with the CC breed have been one of those inevitable trajectories. It has become increasingly evident that this change would come sooner rather than later. CC were hybridized for confinements, not pasture. I've never agreed with so much of the criticism that's bantered about on the Internet: ours were not sedentary; ours did not park themselves exclusively at the feed trough; ours were able to walk, snip clover and chase bugs. Conversely, it has always been obvious that their posture and physical abilities were quite different from our laying flock of chickens, the latter being recognized as looking and acting like traditional "chickens".

For reasons to which I can only speculate, the liabilities associated with CC have accelerated in both time and magnitude. The breeding appears to be either ultra-focused for confinements, or, run amuck - perhaps out of control due to industry consolidation of breeding stock. In the summer of 2013, we experienced an aggressive form of cannibalism instigated by two visible antagonists. We had an unusual number of birds which did not have feathers under their wings along with roughly 10% that were stunted in growth. The feather-

fect your plan-offering both mer harvests,

less problem is best described as a naked chicken. When the wings are lifted, aside from a row of feathers along the backbone, the body was naked. When a chicken sits, the area behind the wings and below the oil gland is not covered by the wings. In this case, it was bare skin. We all know chicken skin has those little bumps - just as we describe geese with goose bumps. It was these little exposed chicken bumps to which the stunted chickens were attracted. Time and time again, as we labored to find the cause of our losses, we witnessed the stunted birds actively scouting their flock mates for chicken bumps to peck.

Unlike confinements, we don't debeak. As we learned, those stunted birds were not stunted due to environmental factors, but rather, an anomaly within the breed. I started to call them Roadrunners as they were fast and agile. Their sharp beak created a wound. In all fairness, their initial pecks did not give the impression of aggression, but rather, curiosity. This however, quickly changed as one peck led to another, inflammation, redness and then... blood. Regardless of what anyone says, even the chickens of the Good 'ole Days would cannibalize one another once blood is present. Chickens are absolutely entranced by droplets of any liquid. It is a "herd" mentality to which one chicken discovers a drop of liquid, and suddenly they all have to have it.

Sharks have nothing on a flock of chickens. I've witnessed a flock of chickens brutally tear apart mice and snakes. It's actually scary to watch due to the way the crowd feeds and escalates the violence. Eventually we were able to segregate the aggressors but only after experiencing unprecedented losses. Even prior to the 2013 season we had been concerned with the fragility of the larger roosters during their last week at which time an ever increasing number were exhibiting cardio-pulmonary type symptoms. Clearly, if we didn't have a harvest date approaching soon, many of these birds would die from complications instigated by their breeding.

Adding further weight to change breeds is the recognition that our initial 10-15 year old capital investment in pasture shelters is rapidly depreciating. If I were in my 30's, as when we started, I'm sure I'd reconsider staying with the same model. But this brings us to another element - labor. It's no surprise that all of our kids get older and move on. What is a surprise is how fast it all happens.

Pastured poultry has been our flagship, but a labor intensive flagship indeed. I'm not saying I can't do it alone. I'm recognizing that it will consume me, ultimately disallowing the time needed to manage the beef herd, hogs, laying flock, making hay etc. Let's add yet another element - climate change. This is most notably recognized as "extremes". Knowing that the next rain storm could result in a field full of birds standing belly deep in yucky water is nerve wracking. Imagine a 2 am severe thunderstorm, high winds, lightning and heavy downpours. You can't sleep, knowing a significant portion of your yearly income is at risk in the field. You



get up, step out onto the porch to look, with the lightning as your illuminator. You see the water ponding. You hear the chirping distress sounds from the shelters. So you suit up in full rain gear and boots, climb up in the hay mow and throw down a half dozen straw bales, carting them out to the field amidst the lightning and downpour.

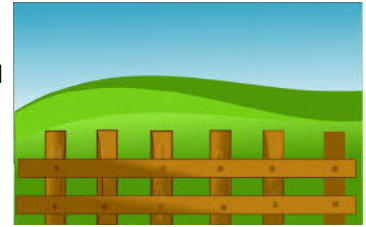
I've learned that if you can hear the sounds of distress from the porch, the actual results upon arriving at the shelters will always be shocking. Piles of soaked dead birds in the corners, as they panicked and jumped on each other. Soaked and shivering birds standing helplessly amidst a current of water flowing through their shelter. Hatches are removed so straw can be added. Most cases, the birds are beyond helping themselves requiring that each bird be lifted up onto the dry bedding. A few hours later, you clean yourself up and return to bed, ready to pickup the pieces in just a few hours. At daybreak, a move onto fresh ground is imperative. The matted straw will need to be removed to allow regrowth. It will take a week to dry the ground - and you know the odds that it will rain again within that week are high. Hence, the process will inevitably be repeated.

So how will changing to to Freedom Rangers help? We will be abandoning the daily shelter move. In the daytime, the birds will be completely free, just like our laying flock. They will return to a group house each night, on their own, just like the layers. (I hope.) Freedom Rangers are much more active than the Cornish Cross so they will forage over a much larger area. Instead of moving shelters in the morning, the door to the group housing will be opened. Feeders will be rotated on pasture. Group housing will be moved as conditions require but there will be less houses to move as well as less frequency. Ultimately, roosts will be available in the group housing which, if trained to use them, will get the birds up off the ground. The most physical labor will be reduced. However, this comes at the expense of a much longer growing term as well as additional feed consumption. The capital expenditure which would have gone to rebuilding shelters (every 10-15 years) will now be spent on group housing as well as woven wire fencing. Because these birds will roam freely, we'll need to keep them out of the yard and road as well as preventing ground-based predation. Installing 2x4 woven wire will be expensive in both materials and labor but will be a lifetime investment. The woven wire will also allow us to do some things different with calves and hogs, if we should choose to do so in the future.

We're walking away from a long history of raising pastured Cornish Cross - a history which evolved to a point in which we were experts at pasturing these birds. Freedom Rangers are not new, but, the process of adapting the breed to a successful Mid-West pasture environment of our size is largely uncharted. In this light, we will act as the test dummy for the states prominent hatchery, who may choose to offer Freedom Rangers to others if our venture proves successful.

Nervous? Scared to try something new? Us too! C'mon...keep some skin in the game. Roll the dice with us. There's no subsidized insurance for farms like ours - no safety net. The only net we're operating with is YOU.

New 40 Acres - Update The new 40, a half mile to the NW as the crow flies, is now planted and fenced. This was not a textbook start. Recall the cold, wet spring of 2013? This stymied our plans to utilize the new seeder to plant this open ground to perennial pasture. What would normally have taken two days in April was instead spread out over a dozen different planting dates from May through July. Each planting was wiggled in between rain events, with no one single planting occurring under anything close to ideal conditions. Because the topography and soil types are quite variable, I was able to methodically work from high to low, a few acres at a time. Still, 10 acres remained unplatable for the season which was a great disappointment both mentally and financially. The late and reduced planting greatly diminished the hay tonnage. Keeping things in perspective, the smorgasbord of planting dates did in fact establish very nicely. The clovers are especially fond of this soil. Can't say the same for the fescue, which is a disappointment as I had high hopes for the Meadow Fescue. Perhaps it will show itself this spring. In any case, it is quite a sight to see such lush green pasture on land which has not seen the likes for decades.



Fencing began immediately after the final beef and pork harvest in October. Brush and tree lines cut, transit lines shot, corner braces set, line posts, woven wire stretched and spliced and finally, gates installed. Still have to straighten, staple and clip the wire to the posts but the full mile long perimeter was sufficient to contain livestock by Thanksgiving, in a nick of time before this perpetual winter began. We've had the older beefers over there, which would include those fuzzy horned Highlanders. The hope was to utilize the stockpiled forage as their exclusive feed for at least a month. I purposely moved them into the lowest reaches, attempting to graze the ground that would be impossible to utilize in the wet spring. This lasted only a few weeks before the perpetual snows began. While I have no doubt that these bovines could have pawed their way through the snow, I am equally certain that in doing so, their performance would have been poor. The fact that we had to begin supplementing with already reduced supplies of hay only added insult to injury for the 2013 season. At this time we have no water or electric so water is hauled daily.

The livestock at the new 40 are destined for the July harvest. It was real easy unloading them onto the new acreage. Getting them off the land will be one of the many priorities this spring as we have no loading facility there yet. We still have to clear over 600 feet of overgrowth for the laneway. The access driveway was put in this spring.

Pig-Happy Pigs = Pig-Happy Pork Pork continues as our fastest growing enterprise. More people are trying our pork, more people are loving it, more people are talking to others about it. Forgive the cliché, but this means of recognition represents the wind beneath our wings. Adept consumers yawn when they hear gushing praise for a product from those who sell the product. Unsolicited praise from people who have nothing to gain by endorsing a product provides wary consumers with a level of sincerity and confidence unobtainable in any form of advertising. So, we'll again raise more pork to meet the growing demand!



USDA Approves Dow GE 2,4-D Resistant Crops Dow has introduced their proprietary seeds, genetically engineered to resist the toxic effects of herbicide 2,4-D. *Safe or unsafe? What do we WANT to hear? A person who wants to learn that 2,4-D is safe can find studies that seem to support this. Likewise for those who want to learn that 2,4-D is unsafe. Somewhere amidst the controversy lies truth and context. Truthfully, 2,4-D is not Agent Orange, as many of it's opponents have labeled it. Agent Orange was comprised of a 1:1 blend of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, the latter having been contaminated with dioxins which were responsible for adverse health effects. Yet by itself, 2,4-D is*



no angel. It's toxicity to biology above and below the soil is species specific. As applied to crops, it is toxic to livestock which may accidentally graze it. 2,4-D is also toxic to dogs. The MSDS lists it as a human poison requiring immediate medical treatment if swallowed or inhaled. The MSDS Health rating is a 3 - defined as Highly Dangerous (0-4, with 0 being Normal and 4 being Deadly). The MSDS further states that anyone handling 2,4-D must have no skin exposed, goggles, respirator and chemical resistant gloves. Those handling 2,4-D must thoroughly wash their hands prior to eating to avoid ingestion. The MSDS also states that 2,4-D should not be applied near waterways as it is potentially toxic to fish and aquatic species. 2,4-D is also known to readily leach from soils. Spills must be contained and absorbed. The MSDS explicitly states that pesticide wastes are toxic and may contaminate groundwater. (Interesting side note: newer MSDS versions downplay earlier noted liabilities.) As is common, Inert Ingredients are not always listed nor evaluated for their potential hazards. Crop oils such as kerosene often comprise a large, if not majority share of an application.

Context: We are knowingly spraying a poison on our food and farmland. This herbicide is applied to crops which will be processed and eaten by livestock, in turn eaten by humans. Humans are exposed to this chemical both through environmental and direct ingestion. However small these levels may be, the effects of time weighted exposure, both environmental and bioaccumulation, are untested and unknown. We ARE the test. At the same time, it is logical and reasonable to intuitively presume that prolonged low level exposure is in the least, unnecessarily risky. Recognize also that this new genetically modified seed/herbicide package is an industry response to the weed resistance now inherent to Roundup Ready plantings - the previous industrial panacea. Perhaps above all is the damage induced by the Feed-the-World-with-Biotech myth. These proprietary seed/herbicide packages are 100% dependent upon limited Haber-Bosch hydrocarbon resources while at the same time being ignorant or indifferent to natural fertility available within the biological soil food web. These products are failing prematurely. Their finite hydrocarbon resources are in high demand. They can only feed the world for as long as these resources remain financially viable... or until their biological recklessness induces pathological anomalies never before experienced in nature.

DATCP/Walker Approve Egg Rule Revision Scope Statement The DATCP claims to have received calls and emails indicating that the agency should revise its rules clarifying licensing and inspection requirements, *particularly* (my emphasis) for egg producers who sell at farmer's markets. Steve Ingham, DATCP administrator, states "we need fair and consistent standards for grading, packaging and labeling to protect Wisconsin's egg producers from sub-standard competition." Ingham characterizes the importance of heightened regulation based on the importance of the egg industry to the state's economy in correlation with escalating outbreaks of illness related to eggs. Ingham further states that, from a public health viewpoint, eggs are viewed as a potentially hazardous food and consumers can't tell much about eggs from the outside. Because of the existing regulation stipulating that farmer's must hold a retail food establishment license required for selling a potentially hazardous food at farmer's markets, Ingham states "we interpret this regulation to mean that washing and packing eggs for retail sale must be done in a licensed food processing plant." The DATCP scope statement was approved by the DATCP and Governor Walker in July, 2013. In November, AB485 was introduced and was passed by the Assembly in February 2014. AB485 is attempting to override the DATCP stipulation requiring a licensed food processing plant, provided that the eggs are from the farmer's flock and the eggs are sold at a Wisconsin farmer's market by the farmer directly to the consumer. At the time of this writing, the fate of AB485 is in the senate.

Analysis: This revision was triggered by calls and emails. How many calls and emails were enough to induce Ingham to change state regulations? Who were the callers? Did these few callers fear for the safety of eggs they themselves had freely chosen to go out of their way to purchase at a farmer's market? Or, were these few callers representatives of industrially-produced eggs who recognize the now trivial yet increasing market share of eggs sold at farmer's markets? Are these questions important when accessing the DATCP's decision to revise policy at the drop of a hat? And what of the parallels to the DATCP's strident raw milk philosophy/policy? Adept readers will recognize Ingham as the DATCP's pit bull of paradigm paralysis. Ingham has proven to be incapable of differentiating food safety hazards as a consequence of livestock density and the natural biological liabilities induced by high density production and processing. Ingham may be receiving his paycheck from taxpayers, but he receives his marching orders from industrial agricultural interests. The dots are transparently easy to connect.

Farm Bill Passed Without AFFIRM Act A bi-partisan WI tag team (Kind, Petri) introduced the AFFIRM Act. AFFIRM capped crop insurance premiums at \$40K/yr/farm; No premium payouts to farms earning over \$250K/yr; transparent disclosure of taxpayer payments to individuals. AFFIRM was voted down with many of the nays coming from recipients of these same farm subsidies. Result: No means test; No cap; No transparency; Codifies historically high commodity prices such that a slight dip below index creates huge payments; Multiple Entity intact (multiple managers on same farm can double dip); 62% of premium is subsidized by taxpayers; 14% return guarantee for insurance companies; Billionaire land owners (who are not farmers) collect millions; Stratified payouts - 4% of recipients collect 33% of payouts; 80% of recipients collect less than \$5K.

Subsidized Crop Insurance has now replaced Direct Payments, which were transparent. Crop Insurance recipients are shielded. Taxpayers paid out 14.1 billion in 2012 with no FOIA rights. With 62 cents of every premium dollar subsidized, recipients are logically opting for Cadillac plans as well as foregoing prudent risk. Marginal and environmentally valuable land is being put to corn, escalating land prices beyond the reach of average people.

Imagine, like farming, that every few years there was certain probability that your home would be severely damaged in a natural disaster. Imagine the high premium you'd face. Imagine the cost vs deductible decision you'd have to make. Imagine that every few years, it happened - your home was severely damaged - you paid the high deductible - the insurance company then made you whole. This parallels farming - expected and uncontrollable risks. Now recognize the recklessness built into this Farm Bill. Imagine that the taxpayers paid for 62% of your premium. You now realize that you can purchase a higher payout. Better yet, the value of your home has been indexed, not to reality, but to an extremely high market anomaly which occurred several years earlier. The deal is so sweet that you can't lose - so sweet that you are enticed to build another house and accept the same "risk". When the "damage" to your home reduces it's value below the inflated "index", you are not only made whole, but are reimbursed more than the actual value of your home. This is how the new Farm Bill has been structured - no caps on payouts - no means test on who receives assistance.

Crop insurance assistance is necessary, but not at this level with such high costs to taxpayers, the environment and without means testing. Stepping back, there is an even bigger picture to which these types of subsidies effect. Our society provides a subsidized safety net almost exclusively to those who will plant corn, soybeans, wheat or cotton. Volume is the incentive. The alternative playing field is not level. At the supermarket, consumers make their decisions accordingly effectively stifling non-subsidized alternatives. How ironic that those who are capable of producing food without subsidy are suppressed by those who masquerade as fiscally conservatives - with one hand regulating competition out of the marketplace - while the other hand collects an egregious intentionally undisclosed taxpayer handout. It's not hypocrisy. It's a calculated deception enabled by an ingenious and infinitely funded propaganda machine. - disseminated through it's prime vector of AM radio stations throughout the country.

Who...

Can Farm???

In 1914, when my Grandpa was 23, the going rate for an acre of Iowa farmland was \$125. Adjusted for inflation, today he'd be paying \$2700. Considering a 160 acre farm size of his day, he would have needed to borrow the 2014 equivalent of \$432,000.

Today's 23 year old wishing to enter farming will require \$1.6 million for those same 160 Iowa acres Grandpa farmed. If this young farmer wishes to row crop, he or she will need at least ten times this acreage to earn a living. Equipment costs would quickly consume another \$1,000,000. Purchasing 100 dairy cows would require \$150,000. This new farmer will still need additional money for operating costs, taxes and living expenses.

The \$432,000 that bought 160 acres in 1914 might buy 60 acres of marginal WI ground in 2014. What sort of living could be gleaned from 60 acres? Small acreage options might include CSA, grass-based dairy, grassfed beef, pastured poultry, pastured pork, pastured layers. Most of these options would have to involve retail sales directly to consumers - BUT - DATCP laws and the subsequent lack of infrastructure, prohibit some of these options.

Decision #1 Make or Buy Feed & Bedding?

Making your feed and bedding avoids paying for another farmer's profit margin. It also allows greater control. Conversely, making all your own feed will consume the time necessary to market and retail your product. Most importantly, making all your own feed will consume most, if not all the land you intended to use for grazing livestock. This is not a difficult decision. A great deal of feed - perhaps even all feed - will have to be purchased.

Decision #2 Make or Buy Replacement Livestock?

As above, breeding your replacements avoids paying another farmer's profit margin as well as allowing much greater control. Conversely, keeping a brood herd of grassfed cows would consume all 60 acres with no land left for raising the retail product. Here too, the answer is less of a decision than a default. You will have to buy your replacements.

Decision #3 What volume is required to earn a \$50,000/year salary?

Farm Net Income - Coming in thru the Back Door

Example Assumptions - Grassfed Beef 1 head/acre rotationally grazed; purchase 100% of hay and feeder calves at current market price; over winter one time - all in, all out. Age = 18 months at market -(not ideal for all). Feeder calf: 550lbs x \$1.75/lb = **\$963**; Hay per calf at \$150/ton = **\$284**; Mineral per calf = **\$14**; Indirect costs per head = **\$343** (Capital equipment, fencing, bldings, maint, supplies, bedding, seeding, interest, taxes etc); Total direct and indirect costs (w/o labor) = **\$1604** per head; Avg carcass wt at 18 months in WI will be 450 lbs. \$50K (minimum desired net income) / 60 head (maximum volume 60 acres of "pasture" can carry) = \$833 net per head needed. Therefore: \$1604 (total material costs to raise beef) + \$833 (necessary markup to earn \$50K salary) = \$2437 Retail price needed. \$2437 / 450 lb carcass wt = \$5.42 /lb Retail price. Comparison to our farm: We've historically sold 30 head per year. 2013 avg price was \$4.79/lb. Conclusion: Small acreage which exclusively markets beef will find it near impossible to earn a living.

The decision to farm is a decision to create jobs. At a minimum, a person vacates an existing job in a city to create a brand new job in a field. Unfortunately, fringe benefits - health insurance, vacation, 6.2% FICA and matching 401K contributions - don't follow an entrepreneur into the high risk *job creation* arena. Thus, few are willing to shed these golden handcuffs. A typical employer sponsored benefits package can easily reach \$20K/year. Thus, someone whose salary is \$50K is actually receiving \$70K in total compensation. Stated another way: If this person had to pay these fringe benefits from their own earnings, their salary would be reduced to \$30K.

Oddly, this is common knowledge only when someone shines a spotlight on the fact. Remove the spotlight, the knowledge dissipates. The proof lies within all the research and disclosure related to farm income. Farm labor is measured at \$15/hr or less. Yearly income benchmarks are lauded at \$40-\$50K - the "corporate" equivalent of \$20-\$30K. Furthermore, no one actually farms "alone". The \$50K desired salary WILL be diluted by the additional help required to handle and process livestock. Note also that 60 head on 60 acres represents ideal circumstances. Actual weather-induced variances will reduce potential considerably. And the CSA option... the rare few that are above water are splitting \$30K between two or more people.

Farm Income = Net Price x Volume. Volume is controlled by acreage and philosophy.

Beef feedlots are designed to accommodate 100 head/acre. Rotational grazing accommodates 1 head/acre. (Other arguments aside.)

Who can farm? Can they afford to farm with livestock densities YOU find acceptable? How many animals per acre is too many for YOU? Meanwhile, supermarket decisions are made. **Consumer demand for low cost induces farmer demand for high density.**

Foreign & Corporate Ownership of Farmland

At this moment, WI majority party legislators are intent on overturning Wisconsin's 127 year old law prohibiting foreign ownership of more than 640 acres of land. Expectations are that the Attorney General will allow WTO law to trump WI law. It remains unclear as to why this is now a front-burner issue. Speculation lies with the WI Real Estate Lobby. The bigger picture reveals the greater concern: Large tracts of farmland are being purchased by investment firms at prices beyond the reach of farmers. UBS Agrinvest entered the winning bid on 9965 acres in SW WI for \$67.5 million. Nationwide, the likes of TIAA-CREF and the Mormon church are also purchasing large tracts of land in quantities and expenditures that are far beyond the reach of individual farmers. The Mormon church owns the largest cow-calf operation in the U.S.. All of this farmland, being owned by a non-farm investment entity, establishes the trend away from individual farm ownership. The non farm entity employs managers who were once owners. Meanwhile, a large percentage of Farm Bill subsidies are paid, not to individuals who own and operate a farm, but to these corporate investment land holders who themselves are not actually farming the land.

Once upon a time... land was owned by a hierarchy - worked by subordinates - at the whim of the hierarchy.

Allowing Non-Farm Ownership- Foreign or Domestic - inflates pricing while placing us firmly onto this retrogressive path.

38+ Acres, Vacant Land	NEW	\$154,900
180 Cow, 210+ Acres	NEW	\$2,200,000
37 + acres, multi-use vacant land		\$379,990
77 + acres, multi-use land		\$799,990
77 + acres, nursery		\$799,990
140 Cow, 123 Acres, 2 Robotic Milkers	NEW	\$999,999
70 Acres Prime Farm Land	ACCEPTED OFFER	\$564,240
157 Acres + or - Fabulous Farmland	SOLD	\$912,402
400 Cows, 112 Acres For Lease or Sale		\$2,000,000
400 Cows, 7 Acres	SOLD	\$850,000
172 Acres Vacant Land	SOLD	\$1,032,000
500 Head Heifer Facility, 105 Acres	SOLD	\$1,300,000
40 Acres Vacant Land	SOLD	\$200,000
500 Cow Dairy, 10-15 Acres		\$1,950,000
500 Cow Dairy, 44 Acres	ACCEPTED OFFER	\$999,500
250 Cow Dairy with 655 Acres	SOLD	\$5,999,995
90 Cow Dairy, 81 Acres		\$795,000
400 Cow Dairy, 353 Acres	SOLD	\$2,506,000
206 Acres, House & Outbuildings	SOLD	\$1,500,000
570 Acres of Land, MN		\$1,100,000
5 Acres, 60 Cows	SOLD	\$229,000
48 Acres Vacant Land	SOLD	\$288,900
40 Acres/2 Ponds		\$495,000
56 Cow, 10 Acres		\$350,000
46 Stall Stanchion Barn, 437 Acres	PRICE REDUCED	\$2,250,000
40 Acres Vacant Land	SOLD	\$230,000

BRATH DAIRY & COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
Dairy Farm • Vacant Land • Commercial
For more info. call:
Ron Brath at 920-251-8127
E-mail: ronbrath@dairyfarmsales.com
John Kissack 920-904-5646 | Jim Cisler 608-835-7705 | Willem Hartman 608-415-8402
john@dsinfarmsales.com | jim@dsinfarmsales.com | william@dsinfarmsales.com

Actual advertisement from February 2014



Hummer Or Camel



Industrial Ag believes they are like the Hummer - fast - efficient - comfortable.

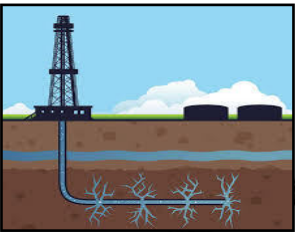
"The only possible way to feed the world."

To them, alternatives are like riding a Camel - slow - inefficient - uncomfortable.

They're wrong on both accounts.

Their wagon is hitched to a dirty, inefficient, nonrenewable fertility system.

Industrial Agriculture Energy/Fertility Supply Chain



Hydrocarbon-Induced Fertility

Alternative Agriculture Energy/Fertility Supply Chain



Solar/Microbial-Induced Fertility

From Today's Hydrocarbon Economy back to Ancient Sumerian Society It All Happened... On The Beach

Let's travel back in time.

Imagine that we'll WALK - one step at a time - from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

With every step we take, we'll travel back in time 50 YEARS.

At 50 years per step, we will arrive at the Pacific - 300 million years past - when today's hydrocarbons were created.

Why should we bother to take this imaginary walk back in time?

To visualize the otherwise inconceivable disparity between ancient Natural SUPPLY and modern Human DEMAND.



Steps	Distance From Shore	Year A.D.	Era Entered
1	2.6 ft	1964	Era of Deep Well Drilling
2	5.3 ft	1914	Era of Easy Well Drilling
3	7.9 ft	1864	Era of Modern Drilling Begins
5	13.2 ft	1764	Industrial Revolution
8	21.1 ft	1614	Copernicus & Galileo
15	39.6 ft	1264	Inquisition
18	47.5 ft	1114	Second Crusade
28	73.9 ft	614	Muhammad
34	89.8 ft	314	Constantine
40	106 ft	14	Jesus

Steps	Distance From Shore	Year B.C.	Era Entered
50	132 ft	-486	Ancient Greece
76	200 ft	-1786	Babylonians
94	248 ft	-2686	Pyramids of Giza
130	343 ft	-4486	Sumerians
200	528 ft	-8000	Ice Age Ends
800	2112 ft	-40,000	Last of Neanderthals
-	2 miles	-200,000	Earliest Homo Sapiens
-	650 miles	-65 mil	Dinosaur Extinction
-	2300 miles	-230 mil	Dinosaur Era Begins
-	3000 miles	-300 mil	Formation of Ancient Hydrocarbons

3 steps from the waves represents the era in which we've burned all the easy oil.

5 steps brings us to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the era of coal.

40 steps and we find ourselves in the time of Jesus and the Romans.

94 steps and we witness the building of the Pyramids of Giza.

130 steps - the length of a football field - takes us to the Sumerians and the beginning of recorded history.

Literally every civilization recorded in human history is witnessed while we're still on the beach.

Beyond the few minutes it's taken us to walk this far back in time, we now enter Prehistoric times.

As we leave the beach, at **200 steps**, we witness the end of the Ice Age.

In a few more minutes of walking, at **800 steps**, we walk past the last of the Neanderthals.

After walking just **2 miles** we see the origins of our very own species - Homo Sapiens - 200,000 years ago.

To witness the extinction of the dinosaurs we will walk 12 hours a day for 18 days, arriving **650 miles** inland - roughly Pittsburgh.

The next 1650 miles will encompass the period when the dinosaurs reigned.

We will have now walked **2300 miles** from civilization's beach on the Atlantic Coast.

We are near the Colorado/Utah state line where we will witness the very origins of the dinosaurs.

There are still 700 miles of walking before we reach the Pacific - 300 million years past.

This final stretch of our journey back in time brings us to the point of origin for the hydrocarbon fuels we are dependent upon.

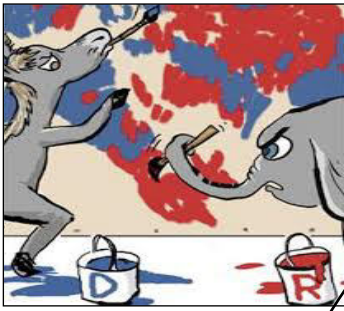
It took 6 million steps to reach the origin of these resources.

It took just 3 steps to consume these resources.

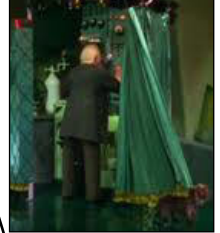
Meanwhile, back at the beach: Take one single step into the future to witness the era of Fracking.

Here we witness a desperate society recklessly endangering their most valuable resource - water - for the final remnants of oil and gas.

What's your definition of Sustainable?



This season is one in which I've allowed the cart ahead of the horse on several fronts. Thus it will be a race to complete the new facilities - group hoopouses; fence and water for new grazing paddocks - literally hours before livestock growth demands new space. I, like most everyone else, am less rattled by the workload than I am by the anxiety induced by the numerous unknowns that will inevitably surface. It will be very reassuring once we've built the bridges to cross these unknowns.



We do this work inside the framework of the bigger picture with our boots on the ground while our ears and minds remain attuned to the periphery. I continue to question the sanity of the investments we're making on this farm. Inside the frame, there is logic, science, reason and unbridled human demand for what we are doing. This represents our Green Light signaling us to keep moving forward. Yet we are indeed framed - bridled, constrained and influenced - by the gravitational pull of the periphery. These influences are now gargantuan and chameleon as they learn to work the system in this post-Citizen's United/Gerrymandered country. It is unnerving when one dwells on the reality that the DATCP can, on the behest of a few alleged phone calls, instigate tighter regulations on farm-to-consumer eggs because *they* need "fair and consistent standards" from "substandard competition." So many say "they" are Big Government. Yet to agree with this assessment is akin to looking the other way when Toto pulled the curtain, exposing the puppeteer.

The Revolving Door between industry and government assures a regulatory environment favorable to corporate interests - interests which view Farm-to Fork enterprises as rogue competition to be eliminated. This peripheral force displays itself as a flashing Yellow Light. It begs a person to question the sanity of investing a quarter million dollars in a pasture enterprise amidst a corporate contrivance intent to portray a pasture as a dangerous place, intermingling livestock with wildlife.

Unlimited corporate money will continue to excel within the tactics of Divide and Conquer. We're told we're either Conservatives or Liberals, both labels to be used as pejoratives relative to the tribe we've chosen. Few take the time to recognize the historical reality that we are most all in fact progressive in nature. Very few of us would advocate the return to times in which women could not vote, children were forced to work in mines and a workweek in which there was no such thing as a weekend much less a vacation. Religiously, even the most devout amongst us could not bare the zeal of the Puritans, who in a moment's judgement, would assess today's conservatives as both liberal and heretical.

Inside the framework we are all just human-beings absorbed in the pursuit of happiness for ourselves and our families. Clean water, healthy, sustainable food and energy are essential in this pursuit. To allow others to divide us for political gain is to be herded like sheep. The single issue being used to divide us will never be resolved through politics, for to do so would instantly extinguish this guaranteed renewable form of political capital. Yet here we are. The single-issue induces the fracture while ironically, the attributes essential to *life* are parsed by default or indifference.

Meanwhile, we've fracked ourselves into believing in an *Energy Renaissance* while at the same time, the *Small Farm Renaissance* may already be in decline with so few capable of consistently supporting a family without off-farm income. The fracking boom has emboldened the industrial paradigm with indifference to the multitude of sand mines it induces on Wisconsin's towns and environment or the 5 million gallons of forever toxic water that each fracked well consumes. Yet amidst the fracking panacea, energy costs remain high as copious quantities are extracted for export to the highest bidder.

Seems to boil down to whether or not a person cares about external costs. We can separate them from the process and dump them on society, or, we can support farms which don't induce the problem in the first place.

We'll continue with the latter, producing food without fracked fertility and without subsidy. Electrical energy will continue to be produced on site utilizing unsubsidized solar and wind energy. The food will continue to be essentially nutritious and by no coincidence, wonderfully delicious.

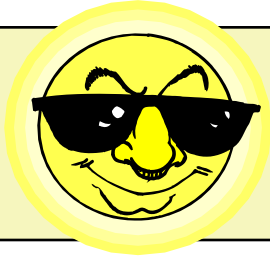
You in?

- Irrelevant
- Irrelevant
- Relevant
- Irrelevant
- Irrelevant



Steve Heyer
Solar Harvest Farm





Solar Harvest Farm

262-662-5278

2014 Harvest Schedule for Pastured Meats
Keep on your refrigerator for future reference!



Pastured Chicken Certified Organic Feed **Price:** Qty: 3-9 \$4.09/lb Qty: **10-19** \$3.89/lb Qty: **20 +** \$3.79/lb

Whole chickens typically 4 - 6 lbs dressed available fresh (NOT frozen) 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). Email us to reserve your order. (Or call if you don't have email.)
- 3). Mark it on your calendar! (If you forget, we need to add \$0.20/lb for early/late pickup!)

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. Volume pricing requirements: Picked-up on time; Single payment per order. (The incentive for us = less transactions and a reduction in people who forget to come!)

Pastured Eggs Certified Organic Feed **Price:** \$5.00/dz (Equates to approx \$2.50/lb) 2dz min order. Pickup Mon. thru Sat.

Grassfed Beef Rotationally-Grazed **Price:** Quarter Beef \$4.99/lb Half/Whole Beef \$4.79/lb* Downpayment: \$100/Qtr

Pig-Happy Pork Certified Organic Feed **Price:** Half Hog \$3.79/lb Whole Hog \$3.49/lb* Downpayment: \$100/half
We're Raising More AGAIN!

Pork & Beef pricing is based on hanging wt. Processing costs are extra with estimates listed on the Yield page.

*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 from that same person.

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. Most of our grassfed beefs are raised on their mother's milk and pasture for the first 7-8 months before weaning onto a winter diet of hay, mineral and molasses. Jersey steers, when we have them, are weaned at a much earlier age. Starting in spring, the beefs are finished 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, 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. 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 diesel fuel nor toxic insecticides for fly control.

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


July	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	6	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 7	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 8	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 9	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 10	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 11	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 12
	13		Chicken Pickup 4-6 pm 15		Chicken Pickup 4-6 pm 17		Chicken Pickup 1-3 pm 19
	27		Chicken Pickup 4-6 pm 29		Chicken Pickup 4-6 pm 31	August 1	Chicken Pickup 1-3 pm August 2

Sept	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		Labor Day 1			Pork Pickup - Hansen's 4	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 5	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	Beef & Pork 10-Noon 20


Oct	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3	Beef & Pork 10-Noon 4
	19	20	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 21	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 22	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 23	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 24	Pork Pickup - Hansen's 25

Nov	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	2	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 3	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 4	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 5	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 6	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 7	Beef Pickup - Hansen's 8

Typical Costs for Half and Whole Pork				2014
Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ To Farm	Processing \$ to Butcher* Detjens - Hansens	Total Cost Estimate
Pork - Half Hog	90 lbs x \$3.79	\$341	\$77 - \$82	\$418 - \$423
Pork - Whole Hog	180 lbs x \$3.49	\$628	\$151 - \$165	\$779 - \$793

Typical Yield From Half Hog (Double for Whole Hog.)		<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. Hanging weights for pork halves range from 60 - 120 lbs. If you'd like more or less than the "typical" estimates provided, let us know!</p> <p>There's two prices listed for processing because the two butchers we use have different pricing.</p>	
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		

Typical Costs for Quarter and Half Beef				2014
Item	Hanging Wt x \$/lb	Meat \$ To Farm	Processing \$ to Butcher* Detjens - Hansens	Total Cost Estimate
Grassfed Beef - Quarter	120 lbs x \$4.99	\$599	\$61 - \$76	\$660 - \$675
Grassfed Beef - Half	240 lbs x \$4.79	\$1150	\$116 - \$148	\$1266 - \$1298

Typical Yield From Quarter Beef		<p>Important Note!</p> <p>The listed weights are typical for the Fall 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>There's two prices listed for processing because the two butchers we use have different pricing. The Schedule page tells you which butcher is used for a specific harvest.</p>	
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		
		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 \$1000 for a half of beef, \$475 for a whole 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, 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!

*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 (Detjens only). 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. For this season, Fall beef quarters may range from 90 - 130 lbs. (July beef 100-160 lbs) Pork halves can range from 60 - 120 lbs. 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 your needs to the weights available.

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.