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Greetings from Longlane Farm!

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Life on the Farm

Last year at this time "life on the farm" was full of concern. The livestock was already suffering from the effects of heat and drought, we were being inundated with forest predators who were taking more than their fair share of our birds, and the vegetable garden was a "write off".

It's great to report that, this year, everything is starting out quite differently. There are no complaints from *these* farmers . . . at least, not for now!

Early this spring we welcomed six calves into our small herd of Shorthorn cattle. We're happy to say that everyone is thriving. We also have five heirloom-variety pigs enjoying their days exploring the pasture, thirteen new laying hens learning about life in the orchard, and one hundred little broiler chickens getting ready for their debut onto pasture. The garden is in, (well, nearly), and the dogs are doing an amazing job at keeping the predators away. If they would only leave the porcupines alone!

For some, this will be an introduction to what we do here at Longlane Farm. For others, this will be an annual update and your opportunity to re-stock your freezer with healthy and tasty meat products.

Our Story

In 2006 we purchased the "Old Porter Farm" on Colpoy's Range Rd., otherwise known as "Longlane B&B", and made this little corner of Lake Charles our home. Over the next three years a couple of things began to happen. Our respect and appreciation for the efforts of the family who developed this farm grew. At the same time, like a lot of people, we were becoming more and more concerned about the source of our food and what we might do about it. At this point we decided to begin farming ourselves, if only on a small scale.

It all started with a few laying hens. Next, we acquired four Shorthorn cattle. Soon our "herd" numbered eight, thanks to a friend's affectionate bull! Then, we decided to raise chickens and pigs as well. Well, as they say, "the rest is history". Currently, we are raising fourteen cattle, twenty-six laying hens, thirteen pullets, five pigs and two hundred broiler chickens!

All of our livestock is raised in a manner that pays utmost respect to the animal's own right to thrive and survive. Our cattle are pasture-fed. Our pigs and chickens are given a mixture of (non-GMO) grains each day. They are also on pasture, digging and rooting for the organisms they find most appetizing!



So Why Raise Pastured Livestock?

There are three critically important reasons for raising pastured livestock: benefits to our health, benefits to the animal's well-being and benefits to the land.

Benefits to Our Health: We've all been inundated with talk around such things as beta-carotene, saturated fats, Omega-3 and -6 fatty acids, conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), Vitamins A and E, to name just a few. Reading the paper or watching the news, talking with your doctor, dietician or friend is enough to drive most of us crazy! By way of trying to keep these discussions really simple we need only remember a couple of key points: everything we do should be kept in moderation and what goes into an animal arrives on your plate! Let us explain.

Animals such as ours, that are raised with a diet of non-GMO feeds, (supplied to us by a local family farm, the Lemkes at Five Star Seeds, in Chesley) as well as everything to be found on the pasture, (plants, roots, bugs,) are able to convert this lovely mixture into a meat with higher than normal levels of several nutrients important to our general well-being and in a form that our bodies can easily access.

Beta-carotene, a fat-soluble plant pigment, used by the body to make Vitamin A and proven to be a powerful anti-oxidant is present in pasture-finished livestock. Omega -3 fatty acids, important to the healthy function of the brain and linked to lowering blood pressure, fighting depression and reducing cancer can be as much as three times higher in pastured livestock than in their grain finished cousins. As well, pastured livestock contains much higher levels of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which can prevent and even reduce cancer-cell

growth and higher levels of Vitamin E, known to help form red blood cells.

Benefits to the Animal: We love knowing that we are raising "happy", healthy animals: outside, running around, eating well, and doing what they've evolved to do. Our animals are not confined, (well, at least if you don't count the electric fence that's been put in place to protect them from predators or to limit their grazing area), they get to express their innate curiosity, (much to our amusement!) and they go about their day in a calm, natural and non-threatening environment. As a result of our approach to animal husbandry we've also had no need to treat our animals with hormones or antibiotics.

For whatever reason, early in our venture into farming, we also determined that we preferred heirloom breeds. At first we just liked the unusual colours of our chicks or the way the old breeds of animals were referred to by people who really knew what they were talking about. But after awhile we realized that by raising these animals we were actually making an important contribution to the genetic diversity of our living system.

Benefits to the Land: We get a huge sense of satisfaction when, in the spring, we take a group of friends out for a walk and they see bright green strips of lush grass running down the length of the pasture. These paths weren't left by aliens. They're the mark of a hundred chickens marching over the ground last summer eating, drinking, picking for bugs, and enriching the soil as only chickens can! Next, we show them how, in one day, fourteen cattle can enjoy a virtual "salad bar" of delectable greens, natural to our area, that they helped fertilize during a previous visit just weeks before.



As many of you know, this area was once a part of Keppel Township, lovingly referred to as Stoney Keppel. Believe me, there's not a lot of dirt around here, but rocks, do we have rocks!

However, slowly, very slowly, with the contributions our animals make, we believe our soil is becoming stronger and more fertile. We can see that our pastures are improving. Not only is the grass being grazed responsibly and the manure stays where it belongs, but the chickens help reduce the number of unwanted bugs, the cattle are especially good at keeping the small trees from encroaching and the pigs, why they're perfect little roto-tillers no matter where you put them!

Purchasing Poultry, Pork and Beef

Now is the perfect time to plan your annual purchase of pastured poultry, pork and, for the first time, we're very happy to say, beef!

This year we're raising five pigs, two hundred meat birds and two steers for "farm gate" sale.

Many of you will read this newsletter and promptly check out just how much freezer space you can make available. Several people have already placed their order(s) for 2013. For others, this might be the first formal newsletter you've received from us. However, in every case, each of you has indicated an interest in finding a source of healthy meat, raised in a humane and environmentally responsible way, to put on your table to share with family and friends.

Along with this mailing you'll find an order form for our products. We've tried to keep this sheet simple, but I'm certain there are some

things we've missed. If you have any questions, please ask.

For those people interested in our beef, we'll have to ask for your patience and for your input. We are still in the process of determining the best way to offer the beef to our customers. Some options might be:

- 50 lb. boxes, mixed cuts
- Mixed quarter (approx. 150 lb.)
- Side (approx. 300 lb.)

Unfortunately, we are not able to give you a price per pound/kilogram at this point. We'll share this information with you as soon as possible.

Let's get back to chicken and pork. In general, last year several people took advantage of the other packaging options made available.

Dale Shefter at Shefter's Poultry in Harriston is able to offer four different packaging options for chicken. You can select the one(s) that best suit your needs. Just remember, in each case you are still purchasing the whole chicken and you will have to take the extra processing/packaging costs into consideration.

Our pork is normally sold in 25 lb boxes. Each box includes an assortment of cuts: a ham (either smoked or fresh) or shoulder-tip roast, chops, ribs, bacon and two types of sausage (garlic and plain). We are also able to offer entire sides of pork for those people who are looking for a different variety of cuts. All cuts are portioned, wrapped and labeled in brown paper. Melvin, at J-Mar Meats in Mount Forest is more than willing to talk to those folk who order an entire side of pork and cut the meat to their personal specifications.



So . . . some key points to keep in mind when you order your meat:

Get your order in early!!

Poultry:

- Birds will range in size from 4 - 8 lbs. with an average size of 6 lbs.
- 4 different packaging options
- 1st batch ready: July 31st
- 2nd batch ready: September 3rd

Pork:

- 2 packaging options
- Ready mid- to late-September

Please note, our freezer space is at a minimum, therefore, try to arrange to pick up your order as close to the “ready” dates as possible.

So Why Should You Pay More Than At The Grocery Store?

After giving it a lot of careful thought, we decided to include this section in our newsletter this year.

For many people, the reason(s) for buying meat from Longlane Farm are already clear. You want your meat raised in a natural, stress-free environment. You want to know that your meat is antibiotic and hormone-free. You want to know that your beef is grass-fed and the grains fed to your pork and poultry, as a supplement to their pasture-grazing, are non-genetically modified.

Most, who know a little about farms such as ours, know that our model is very labour intensive. This is our reality, but we wouldn't change it for anything. We don't raise thousands of one thing, but a relatively small number of several things. Each species has its

own needs and complements the next one. Our livestock sees “the light of day” and has the opportunity to move to fresh pasture every day. This means several visits to each group of animals over the course of the day and organizing and moving fencing as well as feed and water to follow each group of animals.

Now, let's talk about the price of feed. Ah, you knew this was coming. Remember earlier when we said there wouldn't be any farmer complaints . . . well, these aren't complaints so much as explanations. Last year was a terrible year for most farmers and we all expected the price of feed to rise as a result. Well, it did. The price of hay, (which we feed to our cattle over winter), went up by 75%. Hog grower is up 14%, chicken starter and grower are up 16% and 8% respectively.

We can only hope that when you search out the kind of food that we're raising here at Longlane Farm you also understand that you're getting more than just “different” or “unusual”. You are making a real choice toward selecting an alternative meat for your family and friends. You are also sending a message out to those people who are currently in control of our industrial food monopoly that you are no longer satisfied with the status quo.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our “life on the farm”; thank you, in advance, for ordering our poultry, pork and beef; and, above all, thank you for continuing to help us make our “small farm dream” come true!

Bonnie & Phil

