



SENDING A TASTE OF KANSAS TO TROOPS OVERSEAS

ANIMAL WELFARE APPROVED SCHENKER FAMILY FARMS SUPPLIES A LITTLE HOME COMFORT TO OUR AMERICAN HEROES

When Kevin Schenker of Animal Welfare Approved Schenker Family Farms in McCune, Kansas, heard that he was being deployed to Afghanistan in February 2009, he knew that one of the little touches of home he would miss would be his traditional birthday dinner: grassfed Schenker Family Farms rib eyes and baked potatoes.

In the context of the bigger picture—being away from his family and his farm—it seemed a little thing. But sometimes it's these little things that bring comfort to those undertaking a dangerous duty far from home. So when Kevin deployed to Afghanistan, his wife Cherie thought to herself, "We're already shipping our beef all around the country—why not Afghanistan?"

Kevin is a member of the Kansas National Guard and he and Cherie were already active supporters of the AdoptaPlatoon program. Figuring out how to ship a taste of Kansas grassfed beef to Kevin and other soldiers overseas seemed a natural next step in their support for the troops. Cherie thought it would be as simple as tracking down the right shipping container, packing up some steaks, and paying for postage. She didn't realize that she was about

to embark on a project that would involve inventing a shipping container that could withstand the 100-degree-plus temperatures that are common in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"When I found out that most companies won't ship to Iraq and Afghanistan, I initially thought it



Cherie Schenker

Feeding our troops with pride: Kevin and Cherie Schenker, with Kody, Wyatt, Josie, and David of Animal Welfare Approved Schenker Family Farms.

couldn't be that much of a stretch to develop a container that could handle it," Cherie says. "But of course, there was a reason no one was shipping to troops in the Middle East—it's really hot there and it can take weeks for a package to reach its destination."

Cherie began researching her options and found a company in Georgia that was willing to work with her on

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design. Over a period of months, they developed a container using dry ice that could keep the meat frozen for up to 23 days—enough time for the beef to reach even the most remote camp without thawing. "Some camps we can reach in as little as seven days," Cherie says, "but others require a much longer time frame. Our container can handle that."

The container Cherie developed is used only by Schenker Family Farms. It's reusable and made from biodegradable materials so it's also completely recyclable. Schenker Family Farms can ship up to 12 pounds of frozen meat per container and up to 70 pounds of non-frozen meat, such as summer sausage and beef snack sticks (see www.schenkerfarms.com).

Shipping a box of steaks to Afghanistan costs about \$80 in postage, plus the cost of dry ice, containers and the meat. The Schenkers don't ask military families to pay for the containers but do ask

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Back in July I was honored to represent Animal Welfare Approved at the prestigious Aspen Environment Forum in Colorado, where I was invited to speak about the benefits of pasture-based farming and local food issues. The Forum, in its third year, is presented by the Aspen Institute and National Geographic.

It might seem odd that AWA was invited to this event as this was not an animal welfare conference. But I believe that the invitation represents an important milestone. It shows that some of the world's leading environmental policymakers and thinkers agree with what we firmly believe: that pasture-based farming has a vital role to play in a future where peak oil and climate change mean that "business as usual" agriculture is no longer an option.

Themed "Bridges to Sustainability: People, Planet, Possibility," the three-day gathering brought together experts, thinkers, industrialists and activists from a range of backgrounds to confront the environmental challenges we face, and to look at solutions for the future—from ways of preserving biodiversity to providing a stable climate, clean air and water, and food for a growing global population.

Over recent months, the industrial farming PR machine—or Big Ag as I like to call it—has stepped up a gear in its attempts to convince both the public and policymakers alike that the only option is to further intensify farming systems, dismissing any alternative views as "unscientific" or "irrational." So it really was a breath of fresh air to see that the people at Aspen—and we are talking about representatives of most of the major environmental groups, as well as leading thinkers and players—are thinking along the same lines as us.

They recognize that agriculture is central to many of the issues and challenges they are trying to address—and that AWA's approach to farming can help deliver on so many levels. They recognize that while we need to feed a growing global population, we also need to make huge cuts in greenhouse gas emissions associated with intensive farming. They recognize that we are fast running out of oil and gas—so vital to quench intensive agriculture's thirst for artificial fertilizers and other agrochemicals. And they recognize that our unhealthy diet of cheap meat, refined sugars and trans-fats has resulted in vast human health, animal welfare and environmental costs. The consensus at Aspen was that we must develop truly sustainable approaches to food production that will address all of these issues.



Michael Brandis

Talking shop: Andrew Gunther (left) and Doug Fine (farmer, journalist and author of *Farewell, My Subaru*) took part in the lively "Escaping the Feedlot" workshop at the Aspen Environment Forum. www.aspenenvironment.org

We know that grassfed meat is better for us—and for our animals. We know that grass-based livestock systems don't depend on fossil fuel-hungry feedcrops. And we know that by adopting widespread grassland livestock production, the world's soils have the power to literally take CO₂ out of the atmosphere, helping to mitigate the threat of climate change. The Aspen Environment Forum provided a unique opportunity not only to represent AWA and our farmers, but also to reinforce our message to key policymakers and other big thinkers that the way we farm is directly linked to human and animal welfare—and ultimately the future health of the planet.

Andrew Gunther
Program Director

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A CANADIAN FIRST: NATALIE CHARTIER AND JUSTIN AUDET OF LE BISCORNU, QUEBEC

In 2009, Animal Welfare Approved was granted permission to certify farms in Canada, following a rigorous application and review process. AWA's Amy Rutledge spoke with Natalie Chartier and Justin Audet of Le Biscornu in Rimouski, Quebec—the first Animal Welfare Approved farm in Canada—to learn about the challenges of farming in a northern climate and their experiences with Icelandic sheep.



Natalie Chartier

Hardy, intelligent and highly suited to grass-based farming, the Icelandic sheep is one of the oldest and purest domesticated breeds in the world today.

Tell us about your farm.

Our 115-acre farm is our little heaven on earth... and a perpetual work in progress! We bought the farm in 2004 after leaving our life in the city. We experience a lot of temperature variations in Quebec and have a large quantity of snow. It can go as low as minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter and as high as 95 in summer.

You raise Icelandic sheep—why choose this breed?

Icelandic sheep are cold hardy and have a strong, reactive immune system and good mothering instincts, making them ideal for our climate and for grass-based farming. A defining quality of the Icelandic breed is its ability to thrive on pasture. Iceland is not a significant grain-producing country and the breed has survived through its thousand year history on pasture and hay.

Although we sell breeding stock (see www.lebiscornu.com), most of our income comes from selling meat—so weight gain on pasture and general conformation are really important for us. On good grass, Icelandic ewes can raise twins without grain and lambs achieve slaughter weight at 5-6 months without supplemental feed. As part of our breeding program, we recently started using ultrasound to measure the loin, which has helped to improve meat thickness by 12 percent—with no extra fat. Even in this dry summer our lambs have maintained a good weight gain, averaging a 35 pound carcass.

Who are your customers?

Most of our meat is sold directly to consumers and local restaurants. Customers pay half in spring to hold their lambs and the remaining balance when we deliver in the fall. We only sell whole carcasses, cut as our customers want, before being vacuum packed and frozen. The leaner, European-style carcass and mild flavor results in a meat that even appeals to those who claim that they "just don't like lamb." With the combination of the economic and market advantages of grass-based farming—and its delicious meat—the Icelandic breed is a natural choice for direct-to-consumer marketing.

How did you hear about AWA and why did you decide to apply?

It was an advertisement in a farming magazine that tickled our interest. After visiting the AWA website and reading the standards, we were convinced that this was the certification we were waiting for. The main reasons that helped us decide were the fact that AWA makes a distinction between animal welfare and animal rights, that all the standards are practical and science-based, that only family farms can be certified, and, of course, that it's free for farmers. We are really proud to be the first Canadian farm certified by AWA and hope that more farmers will join the program. It feels good having someone saying that we are not crazy to think that animal welfare is important to us, the farmers and our consumers.



Natalie Chartier

Natalie Chartier and Justin Audet of Le Biscornu in Rimouski, Quebec—Canada's first Animal Welfare Approved farm.

USING NATURE'S EFFICIENCY IN GRAZING ANIMALS FOR 21ST CENTURY PRODUCTION

Bob, Susan and Scott Jackson of Tall Grass Bison (TGB) near Promise City, Iowa, manage more than 400 grassfed bison on 1,000 acres. As author Bob Jackson explains, the herds are managed in accordance with natural family order, a truly unique approach which he believes can be applied to all herding animals.

Abraham Lincoln once famously said that "Every blade of grass is a study, and to produce two, where there once was but one, is both a profit and a pleasure."

And so it is at Tall Grass Bison. We manage our bison in socially structured extended family groups which are so important to bison health and well-being. Our farm is a study in progress: we never stress the herd by breaking up families, nor ship them to a sale barn or packing plant. We never treat the animals with hormones or antibiotics, nor feed grain. We believe this approach—the harmony of nature's animals and land—is not seen anywhere outside of Yellowstone National Park.



Bob Jackson

Up close and personal: Within this family group are three mature bulls (with larger heads and thicker horns). This doesn't happen with dysfunctional herd animals.

Natural Order

Starting with three bison calves in 1976, we now maintain four to five extended families on converted crop ground and native oak savanna prairie. By managing herds for social order, we can obtain the unparalleled efficiency of nature and highest ethical animal care standards—all while maintaining a high level of ecological sustainability. And we believe it is possible to apply the principles of extended families and social order management to any domesticated grazing herd or flock animal.

Our beginnings at TGB started with growing up on a diversified Iowa farm, fortified with fish and wildlife biology degrees from Iowa State and Cornell University. College drilled into us that nature is most efficient. Yet modern agricultural practices said this wasn't

so. Where was the compatibility? It took a career as a seasonal back country ranger in Yellowstone, for my part, to find solutions. For 30 years, I patrolled 1,200 square miles on horse, sometimes staying in for five months a year. While searching for poachers, this gave me the best possible opportunity to study wild bison and elk. It didn't take long to see that these herds had a complex social infrastructure (families) only recognized before with elephants.

Observing Nature

Combining these observations with an interest in indigenous people, I soon realized that the organization of hunter-gatherer tribes and herd animals and flocks were the same. How to manage and harvest herding animals became a lot easier to understand. At TGB we see our animals as owning the corporation, not us. It is the extended family that

produces the product in the form of spin-off "satellite families" which we then harvest as an entire unit. Our job is to make sure we don't screw up and make the core families dysfunctional. Thus, our bison do not have the chronic stress and anxiety associated with intensively managed herd animals.

So what do social order herds look like? Nature's buffalo or cattle herds would consist of matriarchal core families of 60-70 animals (25-35 on arid lands) with great-great-grandmothers down to dependent offspring. Spin-off satellite herds start with 20-25 animals. Bull groups consist of teenage (3-5 year olds) animals, active breeder age (6-8 year olds) of up to 15-20 animals and, finally, mentor grandfathers in smaller groups of 3-5 in number. Thus, nature's herds consist of maybe two-thirds matriarchal and one-third males—like ours.

Around 300 animals seems to be the magical number for interactive recognition and association. It is the same for elephants, primates and elk. Beyond this number, the herd will split into territories, each protecting their turf from other herds. Although recognition and support continues between distantly related groups, the relationship becomes more about common cause, trust and familiarity rather than emotional attachment.

The Advantages?

In modern husbandry a dry cow is considered a burden to the rancher's bottom line and is slaughtered after pregnancy checking. In social structured herds, however, a dry cow becomes the babysitter for other calves, so mother can forage better. She gathers up all the stragglers when the main herd goes to pastures across the road. There is no panic when

mothers see their calves are not with the herd. They can watch over older dependents while the babysitter (who may be the grandma) does a quick survey to see who is missing, walks back, and returns later with the missing youngsters.

As for the males, we used to park our John Deere 3020 in front of the field gates when it was moving time to keep the crunch of the herd from breaking through. After 10-12 years, the older bulls have assumed herd discipline. Now, one or two walk to the front, turn sideways, and the rest of the herd stays back. Even after the gates are opened there is no movement until those bulls turn parallel to the lane. Then everyone rushes past them to get to new grass on the other side of the road. These non-breeding bulls and old cows are therefore worth a lot in terms of overall herd performance.



Bob Jackson

Natural order: Two related but separate family groups at water; the first main group to the right and a smaller group to the left (on the hill).

Grazing

Susan and I are part of Utah State University's Behavioral Education for Human, Animal, Vegetation, & Ecosystem Management (BEHAVE) initiative. Members discuss such topics as "eating the best and leaving the rest," riparian overgrazing problems, and fencing needs for rotational grazing. But with social order herds, solutions happen naturally.

Because grazing families stay close together, we end up with multiple families practicing management intensive grazing (MIG) without fences at different locations in the same pasture. With families there are two types of grazing: *en masse* movement and static. With *en masse* grazing, yearlings and two-year-old dependents lead the herd, staying just in front of their older relatives. This means they eat the most succulent forage (eliminating conventional creep feeding) and keep the entire herd moving forward for more uniform grazing across the landscape. Add in nature's usual male component within the herd and you now have a group which utilizes coarse vegetation, resulting in new growth for females and dependents without the cost of brushing pastures.

During times of static grazing the young learn what to eat from their elders. With most native forbs (and weeds) that means not eating from the top down, but rather selecting out high nutrition parts of the plant at appropriate times of the year. Without this training, herbivores are relegated to a nutrient-deficient "grassivore" existence.

Herd Development

It takes 12-15 years to establish a basic functional social order herd in



Bob Jackson

Bob and Susan of Tall Grass Bison.

cattle or buffalo (less time with pigs, goats and sheep). This may seem like a long time but it is no different than the time required for a purebred beef producer to establish his or her own line or distinctive herd identity.

In social order herds, the cows of each functional family pick the males to mate with. Thus, grandma, mother and daughter can have offspring from the same male without inbreeding. The younger, unrelated bull who always follows this older male mentor around will breed with the younger females after the old guy is exhausted from mating with the older cows. With separate family identity, herds with multiple families can therefore offer a closed, disease-free option for producers. Finally, only in extended families does one have a situation where every animal in this family can pass on genes without necessarily having offspring. I suspect farmers reading this article can figure this one out better than most of the animal scientists we present this concept to!

The Final Product

We field slaughter all members of a family, leaving other families structurally intact. This means

harvesting every animal in a matriarchal family—from calves to 25 year old bulls and cows—and can include up to 150 individuals per harvest. The male components are also harvested as entire bull groups. And there are always individuals to harvest who are shunned by their families. If this seems counterproductive, think about having three towns; is it better to disrupt the infrastructure of all three or to eliminate one and leave the other two to absorb the resources of the third?

We match the meat from every age of animal with the ages and activity levels of our customers, on the basis that softer muscle of very young and elderly animals is easier to digest for preschoolers and seniors. Active-aged humans need the superior nutrition offered by the meat of mature animals (remember that an animal cannot concentrate nutrients until growth stops). It is a myth to think that the meat from mature animals is tougher. Without the chronic stress associated with dysfunctional, weaned animals, muscles don't get tight and acids don't build up. In the last year we sold \$160,000 worth of half quarters, quarters and hanging halves to private customers across the U.S.

Animal Welfare

It is impossible to raise herd animals in families without acknowledging that we are their brother's keepers. One learns, therefore, to be sensitive not only to each individual but also to the whole family. This includes putting hay out in the winter in different locations for each family. And you soon learn that you cannot shoot or field slaughter individual animals in the herd and still expect to get fresh, clean tasting, tender meat.

There are many other topics that we don't have space here to cover, such as the importance of families in predator defense, the cascade effect on other species, and the fact that, in terms of ecological sustainability, nothing in modern management even comes close. But that is for another time.

—Author Bob Jackson farms bison as naturally as possible near Promise City, Iowa. Visit www.tallgrassbison.com.

In the next issue look for AWA bison farmer, Hugh Fitzsimmons of Thunder Heart Bison, Texas, and his range of bison-related products.

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that they return them for reuse. The Schenkers also offer the families a discount on the meat and pay for half of the cost of the dry ice. Cherie estimates they have sent more than 200 containers to date.

“We did a big order at Christmas for the Iowa Air National Guard. The Des Moines Rotary Club sent over 200 pounds of sirloin steak and we just finished an order for the Minnesota National Guard,” Cherie says. “We are averaging two to three shipments a week.”

The real payoff, however, comes from the troops themselves. Cherie regularly receives fan mail from the grateful recipients of Schenker Family Farms products. “I’ve received notes from privates who thought no one out there was thinking of them,” she says.

“Another soldier told me that if I wasn’t married, he’d be at my door! We sent our AdoptaPlatoon something extra on their birthdays, and for Christmas last year we sent all kinds of different brats so they could have a Christmas cookout. That’s what really makes it worthwhile—knowing that we’re bringing some closeness and comfort to these young men and women who are so far from home.”

Cherie’s family has been farming in Kansas for five generations—before McCune was even a town—and

from the beginning they’ve had a strong commitment to the welfare of their animals. “My grandfather was adamant about treating our animals right,” Cherie relates. “He



Cherie Schenker

Deployment day: Kevin Schenker and his son, David.

believed that if we treated them well, they would treat us well. For five generations we have been a pasture-based operation, putting the care and welfare of our animals front and center.”

The Schenkers have a herd of 300 cattle on about 320 acres. The biggest difference in how the

Schenkers run their farm these days isn’t on the pasture, it’s in the office. According to Cherie, “Times have changed. The marketing alone is a lot of work and there are many extra steps and expenses. It’s not my granddad’s farm business anymore. But it’s really worth it. We’ve experienced growth every year, even in this rocky economy. There’s a much greater awareness of the health and welfare benefits of grassfed beef today.”

Kevin, who returned from Afghanistan this summer, is glad to be back at home with Cherie and his children: Kody, 16, Wyatt, 11, Josie, 9, and David, 2. Did he get his rib eye birthday dinner? “I did,” he says. “And it really hit the spot. I knew before I went over that the troops appreciated getting care packages from home, but once you’re there you really see how much it means to know people are thinking of you and to have that little taste of home.”

The platoon the Schenkers adopted from Fort Riley, Kansas has come home and the Schenkers have adopted a new one—17 soldiers who can look forward to regular shipments of grassfed Kansas beef. “We can’t ship to Afghanistan and Iraq in August and September—it’s just too hot,” Cherie explains. “But we’ll be able to start up again soon and we’ll make sure the new platoon gets a regular taste of the heartland, too.”

—Amy Rutledge



MEAT LABELING 101

As the popularity of direct marketing grows, farmers are interacting with their customers and learning to think more like retailers. Any meat sold for public consumption must have a label, so why not use your label as effectively as possible?

Why Should I Care What My Label Says?

For starters, accurate labeling is a legal issue. The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, 317.8 (a) states, “No product or any of its wrappers, packaging, or other containers shall bear any false or misleading marking, label, or other labeling.” This includes any statement, word, picture or design associated with the product.

But your label is not just needed for regulatory compliance; it’s also a marketing tool. Your label is often a customer’s introduction to your farm and your products—and first impressions matter. It’s an opportunity to give customers information that will make them feel good about buying your product.

Step 1: Talk to Your Processor

Your processor can often help you to design a label that meets your needs. Many processors will include the farm name and possibly a logo, either for free or for a small setup fee. However, label space is usually tight so if you want to include additional information such as certifications, claims or logos, it is probably worth creating a preprinted or supplemental label.

Before you start designing, make sure your processor is willing and able to accommodate your ideas. Will they apply any additional labels? Some just don’t have time, while others may charge a fee. Any labeling (other than inclusion of pricing and farm name) MUST be done at the



Cane Creek

An example of the use of an additional label to supplement the processor’s label. AWA offers free labeling assistance to farms in the program.

processing plant under an inspector’s supervision. It is illegal to affix anything else to the package afterwards and can be viewed as misbranding, according to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Part 112.

Another option is to work with your processor’s label supplier to produce preprinted labels that fit the plant’s labeling machine. However, this often requires large quantities and can be very costly. Many farmers find that creating a supplemental label is the most economical way to include additional information. If you decide to take this route you will need to apply for approval using FSIS Form 7234-1, explained later in Step 3.

Step 2: Decide What to Include on Your Label

Required

All meats must be labeled with the following information:

- The contents of the package (name of the product, e.g. “lamb chops,” “ground beef,” or “pork sausage”).
- If the contents have other ingredients (like spices in sausage), those ingredients must be listed (e.g. “ground pork, salt, red pepper, sage, and black pepper”) in descending order.
- Safe handling instructions, including, if appropriate, “Keep refrigerated or frozen.”
- The mark of inspection with processing plant number.
- The net weight of the package.
- The name and address of the processing plant, or if the name and address are other than the processing plant (such as the name and address of a farm), it must be qualified by a statement identifying the person or firm associated with the product (e.g. “Packed for ___” or “Distributed by ___”).

Additional Information, Claims, Logos and Certifications

We know that consumer demand for “ethical” food is on the rise, but how can you prove that your product qualifies? A 2010 study by Context Marketing reports that in order to qualify as an “ethical food,” consumers felt the product must avoid harming the environment (93%), meet high safety standards (92%), use environmentally

sustainable practices (91%), avoid inhumane treatment of animals (91%), and be produced to high-quality standards (91%). The study also showed that 69% of consumers are willing to pay more for food produced to higher ethical standards.

Farmers using the Animal Welfare Approved label feel the same. Rose Marie Belforti of Finger Lakes Dexter Creamery in New York explains, “The Animal Welfare Approved program reflects the concern I have for my animals, and having the AWA label on my cheese tells consumers that not only are they getting an ethical product, they are getting a superior product.”

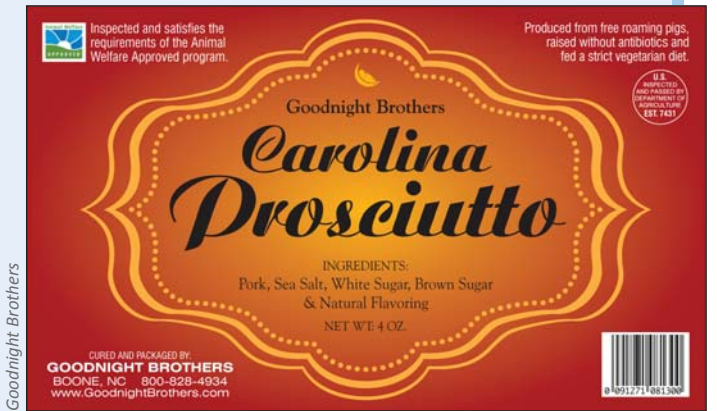
How can I make sure that my label accurately reflects my farm?

1. Identify your values and those of your customers: What do you want to communicate?
 - Humane
 - Pasture-/range-based
 - Organic
 - Environmentally responsible
 - Local
2. Make sure your claims comply with existing regulations.
3. Look for a credible third-party certification.

Step 3: Complete FSIS Form 7234-1

While this form may look intimidating it should be relatively straightforward to gather the necessary information to substantiate your claims and get your label approved. Although you can fill the form out yourself, it can take longer—especially if you are new to the process—and you will need to resubmit your application if it is rejected. “Expediting” or paying a firm to prepare and deliver the form can speed up the process, and fees are normally around \$50. However, Animal Welfare Approved offers labeling assistance to farms in the program at no charge—for more information contact Emily Lancaster at Emily@AnimalWelfareApproved.org or (919) 428-1641.

The basic process for submitting a claim is explained on page 2 of the form. You will need to work with your processor to ensure you have the correct information for product names and formulas, processing procedures, HACCP category (handling protocol) and Establishment



Goodnight Brothers

First impressions matter: Goodnight Brothers’ Country Ham is made from AWA pork from the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association and meets all the FSIS labeling requirements.

Number (specific to each slaughter plant). If the product consists of various cuts of a single product (i.e., beef, pork, lamb, etc.) you may include all cuts in Box 8. However, if there are separate processing procedures or additional ingredients (as in sausage) you will need to submit a separate application for that product.

Remember that a label is specific to you, your processor and your product, and is approved for use at a particular federally inspected establishment. If you change establishments you must seek a new label approval. A few final words of advice: remember to type/print and ensure that the label itself is legible and that you have provided sufficient evidence to support your claims (use the Label Submission Checklist included in the Resources section below to avoid common mistakes). Once your label is approved, you will receive notification and can begin using it on your products!

—Emily Lancaster

Note: Egg and dairy labeling are governed by the laws of each state, and can vary widely depending on the size of your operation. We will address the separate requirements for these products in an upcoming issue, so stay tuned.

Resources

Frequently Asked Questions about Processing and Marketing Beef, Pork, Lamb and Goat Meats In North Carolina and South Carolina, by Heifer International, NC Choices, and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association.

A Guide to Federal Food Labeling Requirements for Meat and Poultry Products

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/labeling_requirements_guide.pdf

Application for Approval of Labels, Marking or Device (FSIS Form 7234-1) <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/fsisforms/7234-1.pdf>

Label Submission Checklist http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/Label_Submission_Checklist/index.asp

Glossary of Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp



COOPERATIVES AND MARKETING GROUPS

As the number of Animal Welfare Approved farms continues to grow, more farmers are working together to form cooperatives or marketing groups to supply bigger markets and get better returns.

While we support such initiatives, please remember that there are a few simple steps that you should take before setting up a cooperative or marketing group to ensure that the integrity of the AWA logo is maintained.

The simplest set-up is when a group decides to market all products under the AWA logo. We can audit all the original group members before products are marketed with the AWA logo, and you can ensure that any future members have passed an AWA audit before they join.

We recognize, however, that businesses sometimes grow faster than expected, and you may need to bring new farmers in quickly. At your own risk you can invite new members to join before they are audited. However, it is important to note that products from those new members cannot use the AWA logo until they are audited and approved.

If you want to market your entire group as Animal Welfare Approved, then all group members must have passed an AWA audit and hold current approval. If you have a large marketing group with several different farms and products, and only some are AWA, you can only market the approved products under the AWA logo. If you are in any doubt, please email info@AnimalWelfareApproved.org.

—Tim Holmes



AWA recently held its annual auditor training course, welcoming six new auditors to the program. Annual training ensures AWA auditors are up to date with the latest information and helps ensure that audits are carried out consistently and accurately.

WELCOME NEW FARMS

The Animal Welfare Approved program is happy to announce that the following farms have been accepted into the program:

- Adam McLendon Farm, Leary, GA
- Bedinger Sheep Farm, Catlin, IL
- Bowers Ranch, Concordia, KS
- Cherokee Rose Ranch, Arlington, GA
- Classic Organic Farm and Market, Gaviota, CA
- Coonridge Organic Goat Cheese Dairy, Pie Town, NM
- Crawford Farm, Lake Butler, FL
- Deer Creek Farm, Inc., Morris, GA
- Duckett Farm, Midway, TN
- Gibson Family Farm, Valley Falls, NY
- Grass Field Beef, Hondo, TX
- Hedgebrook Farm, Winchester, VA
- Hoffmann Farm, Fabius, NY
- James Ranch Artisan Cheese, Durango, CO
- JW Beef, Stonington, CT
- Lucky 3 Farm, LLC, Louisburg, NC
- Minka Farm, LLC, Efland, NC
- Murdock Farms, Gatewood, MO
- Noah D. Ginerich Farm, Ethridge, TN
- Paradise Runamuck Ranch, Halfway, OR
- Piney Grove Farm, Headland, AL
- Pondview Farm, Limington, ME
- Popp Farms, Jefferson City, MO
- River Rock Family Farm, South Weber, UT
- Rock Hill Ranch, Suisun Valley, CA
- Rock Mine Farm, LLC, Bluffton, GA
- Rose Family Ranches/D-Bar S Ranch, Gilbert, AZ
- Sabra Ranch, La Grange, TX
- Soul Food Farm, Vacaville, CA
- South Chestnut Farm, Raleigh, NC
- Stuckey Farms, Fort Gaines, GA
- Summerford Cattle, Ashford, AL
- Swinson Farms, Mount Olive, NC
- Walker Texas Ranch, Douglass, TX
- Wooten Farm, Albany, GA

We are proud to celebrate the achievements of *Animal Welfare Approved*. Please forward your news to Emily@AnimalWelfareApproved.org

Grazin' Angus Acres of Ghent, NY supplied short ribs for the wedding reception of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky on Saturday, July 31 in Rhinebeck. www.grazinangusacres.com

Award-winning cheese maker Deneane Ashcraft of **North Valley Farms Chèvre** in Cottonwood, CA was the featured farmer at the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op's "Meet the Farmer" event. Ashcraft's chèvre cheese also appeared in *Sacramento Magazine*. www.northvalleyfarms.com

The Third Annual Madison County Buy Local Week featured an Open Farm Day at **BMR Acres Farm** in Canastota, NY. www.bmracres.com

Kauai Kunana Dairy of Kilauea, HI was the featured farm in the summer issue of *Hanai'Ai*. www.kauaikunandairy.com

Foxhollow Poultry Farm of Elkhart, IA was featured recently on RFD-TV's *Living the Country Life* and in the July/August issue of *The Iowan* magazine as part of the article, "The Comeback Craze." www.foxhollowpoultryfarm.com

Cathy Lafrenz of **Miss Effie's Country Flowers and Garden Stuff** in Donahue, IA was recently awarded the Lujack's Extra Mile Award. www.misseffiesflowers.com

Kinderhook Farm in Ghent, NY partnered with Frank Morison and Brigid Sweeney of AWA to present a pastured egg workshop at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture's Young Farmer's Conference. www.stonebarnscenter.org

Mel and Joyce Williams of **MJ Ranch** in Lawrence, KS presented at the Eastern Kansas Grazing School and hosted a tour of the ranch. www.mandjranch.com

Nitschke Natural Beef/Circle N Ranch of Jefferson County, OK supplied AWA beef for the first ever sustainable BBQ competition, "Blues, Bandits and BBQ," in Dallas, TX. www.nnbeef.com

Berry Creek Farm in Blanchard, OK, held a Community Supported Agriculture picnic. www.berrycreekfarm.us

Captain John S. Pope Farm in Cedar Grove, NC and **East Fork Farm** in Marshall, NC were featured farms as part of the North American tour of the organization, Outstanding in the Field. www.outstandinginthefield.com

Bear Meadows Farm in Boalsburg, PA hosted its annual Customer Appreciation Day farm tour.

Patient Wait Farm in Piedmont, SC is partnering with CFSA for OktoberFresh, the fourth annual upstate harvest festival, to be held October 3. www.patientwait.com

Thunder Heart Bison of San Antonio, TX is profiled in the new book, *Edible: A Celebration of Foods*. www.thunderheartbison.com



Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann, former New York State Senator and former Chairwoman of the NY Senate Agriculture Committee, receives the AWA seal from AWA Program Director Andrew Gunther at Hoffmann Farm in Fabius, New York.

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—Lauren Nitschke, Circle N Ranch
in Jefferson County, OK



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