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## TWELVE-YEAR OLD FARMER HATCHES SUCCESSFUL PASTURE-RAISED EGG BUSINESS

**--Shelby Grebenc of Broomfield, CO is youngest Animal Welfare Approved® farmer to date--**

**Broomfield, Colorado** – Amidst the reality that the average age of farmers in the U.S. is rising, twelve-year-old Shelby Grebenc, founder of “[Shelby’s Happy Chapped Chicken Butt Farm](#),” has become the youngest Animal Welfare Approved farmer.

When she was 10, while most children are asking their parents for allowance money and still believe that eggs come from grocery stores, Shelby Grebenc was soliciting her grandmother for a \$1,000 loan to launch her own pasture-raised egg business. Shelby’s mother Nancy, who has multiple sclerosis, was in a nursing home at the time, and Shelby started selling eggs to expand the family’s income.

Shelby had learned about taking care of laying hens on the family’s four acres in Broomfield, Colorado when she was just 6 years old. “Dad was trying to teach me to be an adult,” she says, so he gave her chores—watering, feeding, and letting out the family’s small flock of chickens. Shelby indeed learned responsibility from the experience.

Shelby’s flock of laying hens has been officially certified as Animal Welfare Approved, a certification and food label that lets consumers know that the chickens of Shelby’s farm were raised in accordance with the highest animal welfare standards in the U.S., using sustainable agriculture methods on an independent family farm. Shelby learned about the Animal Welfare Approved program from a neighbor and decided she would like her hens to have the distinction of being raised with the highest animal welfare standards.



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“Shelby Grebenc is a young woman whose dedication to high-welfare farming is inspirational during a time when the average age of the American farmer continues to rise,” says Andrew Gunther, Program Director at Animal Welfare Approved. “We amended our policies to allow Shelby to sign the forms and become the named farmer. We require an enforceable agreement with our farmers, so Shelby’s father had to co-sign the agreement, although we work directly with Shelby. We are very excited to support young farmers who will truly be providing the healthiest, safest and most sustainable food for future generations.”

Although balancing her business with her 4.0 grade point average and an abbreviated social life can be full of challenges, Shelby isn’t fazed by this responsibility. It takes her about an hour each day to feed her hens, put out fresh water, and collect and clean the eggs. Her flock currently has 130 hens, which produce between 28 – 56 dozen eggs a week.

What do her middle-school peers think about Shelby’s entrepreneurship? They’re “astonished,” she says with a laugh, that she goes to the bank and, using her Colorado state-issued ID, she withdraws money to buy chicken feed. While some friends think it is pretty cool, she says that “many don’t understand farming. As my dad says, it’s part of life, BUT it is our job to make sure [our] animals have the best, most enjoyable life possible while we have them. I love my animals and I make sure they are happy but I also understand the outcome.”

Shelby sells most of her eggs to neighbors in Broomfield. Customers can call her or look for the big yellow sign she places at the end of the driveway when she is available to make sales. She and her dad will also deliver eggs within one mile of their home. Shelby doesn’t have plans of giving up her business anytime soon. “I’ll definitely raise [chickens] forever,” she says. “I love chickens. They’re interesting and fun.”

*[Animal Welfare Approved](#) is a national nonprofit organization that audits, certifies and supports farmers raising their animals with the highest welfare standards, outdoors on pasture or range. Called a “badge of honor for farmers” and the “gold standard,” AWA has come to be the most highly regarded food label when it comes to animal welfare, pasture-based farming, and sustainability. With farms across the country and in Canada, AWA serves as the eyes and ears of the conscientious consumer. All services are offered for free to farmers and all standards, policies and procedures are available on the [AWA website](#), making it one of the most transparent certifications available.*

*For more information on where to find products from Shelby’s Happy Chapped Chicken Butt Farm and other AWA farmers in retail outlets, markets, restaurants and online, please check the AWA directory at <http://www.animalwelfareapproved.org/product-search/>.*

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