

# green pastures



SPRING 2012 NEWSLETTER

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## Launch for New Grass Fed Beef Products held at Vita Health



L- R - Mathew Holtmann (Vita Health owner), Dori Gingera-Beauchemin (Assistant Deputy Minister - Agriculture), Carla Radford, Bragi Simundsson (Producers).

February 24, 2012 was an exciting day for our grass fed beef producers. Several years of product development, logo creation, and food packaging design finally culminated in a new product launch at Osborne Village's Vita Health Fresh Market store. We were pleased to offer our new product recipes – some of which were developed by our members and some by Chef Helmut Mathae. The Food Development

Centre in Portage La Prairie also assisted by developing nutrition labels for the products.

Two of our producers, Carla Radford, Roblin, MB and Bragi Simundsson, Arborg, MB, prepared and offered three of our recipes to the Vita Health customers in the store. Customers sampled the Saskatoon Berry and Maple Sausage (with whole saskatoons within), Farmer Sausage, and Saskatoon Berry with Wine Pâté.

“We found that people really enjoyed the samples. In fact, one shopper who said he didn't normally eat meat, sampled one type of sausage and liked it so much he sampled everything and even had seconds!” →



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said Simundsson. “People had lots of positive comments: they liked the taste and they were happy to see that it was made locally from Manitoba products. They were also pleased to see that the products were gluten and nitrate free.”

Radford and Simundsson explained the health benefits of a well balanced ratio of Omega 6 to Omega 3 (essential fatty acids) and higher levels of conjugated linoleic acids (CLA’s), and that they don’t use any additional growth hormones or antibiotics in the raising of our cattle. “Our producer members use different butchers. I get my beef cut at Archie’s Meats in Starbuck and they also make my sausage. The Saskatoon Berry with Wine Pâté was made at Earl’s Meat Market in Steinbach.”

Production from our growers is ramping up and the association just had two new members join our group this year. There are another four producers that have also indicated they intend to join our association. In the future, the association hopes to be selling fresh beef, but currently the product is only available frozen. However, if customers want to buy roasts, wieners, and other cuts you can contact any one of our producers directly to see what stock they have.

According to Ryan Copen, Grocery Department Manager of the Osborne Store, our customers are looking for products that are fresh and wholesome. “Everything we sell has a natural aspect about it – it has to be the right fit. It can be organic or natural, like the grass fed beef which is not organic, but has a wholesome aspect to it. We also like to buy local and we do that as much as we can.”

Joining us at the product launch was Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture Dori Gingera-Beauchemin and Vita Health President Mathew Holtmann. “These producers have really worked hard to get their products out in the market and we are very pleased to be able to participate in this launch,” says Gingera-Beauchemin. The Assistant Deputy Minister sampled the products and toured the grocery store identifying many ‘Made in Manitoba’ products on the shelf. “It is really great to see so many local products and how Vita Health is serving the community by providing alternative products for people.” Manitoba



Ryan Copen, Grocery Department Manager, Osborne St. Vita Health Store

Agriculture, Food & Rural Development’s Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative (ARDI) have provided support to the association over the past few years.

President Mathew Holtmann is keen to service his customers, “We like to let people test out the food we sell and educate them about the ingredients and health benefits. By having the actual producers and creators of the product here in the store, people can gain a first hand understanding of the health benefits of grass fed beef.”

Vita Health Fresh Market stores will be having some pancake breakfasts in the summer. Stay tuned for details on when and where you can sample some pancakes and grass fed beef sausage. Check our website [www.manitobagrassfedbeef.ca](http://www.manitobagrassfedbeef.ca) or find us on Facebook.



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## Around TOWN University of Manitoba Seminar

It's not only animal scientists and their students interested in grass fed beef; it's also University of Manitoba's Plant Science students. This past November, over 40 students attended a seminar on Grass Fed Beef Production by Jim Lintott, one of our producers. Dr. Yvonne Lawley and Dr. Martin Entz, Department of Plant Science had requested the presentation.

"It's not just the cow genetics that creates tender meat," says producer Lintott, "it's everything it eats and how it's handled from beginning to end." Lintott is the Manager of Springfield Cattle Company, a group of farmers and investors in the Oakbank area. Lintott oversees the mainly Black Angus herd of 93 bred cows, 18 heifers and their calves for a total herd of 170 head this winter.

Lintott has been working steadily for the past 4 years to improve his cattle genetics. "Not all cattle are suited for grass fed beef production. Some just don't do well, they don't gain weight, don't breed or don't finish properly," says Lintott. To improve this he has been selecting the best genetics from within the herd and has also been getting very good results with home raised bulls. He has also brought in genetics from as far away as New Zealand, using semen from a herd of Devon cattle that have not seen grain for 75 years. He also has obtained genetics from Jonathan and Stefan Bouw at Anola, MB, who are developing some very good grass fed genetics.

Land management is another important aspect for his operation. Having some alfalfa present in the pasture is good for the soil. Alfalfa has the ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere and render it available for the alfalfa plant, eliminating the need for nitrogen fertilizer. In turn, some of that nitrogen becomes available for the grass species, boosting the total yield. Rotating his cattle through his 19 paddocks and bale grazing in the winter months helps fertilize the land and has also eliminated the need for manure management (cleaning out pens and moving manure to another location).

Today, Lintott's cattle calve in May in his breeding pasture (a paddock that is used only once a year; reducing the opportunity for disease). This is opposed to the traditional way of calving January through April. "Our cattle calve right in the pasture, just like the deer." The pasture has plenty of thick grass and a lot of bush and forest for shelter. The cattle are then moved to summer pastures near the end of June. "We go from Kentucky blue grass to clovers, timothy and orchard grass and our pastures have alfalfa, red clover, sweet clover and trefoil."

"Our cattle need a balance of energy – this is derived from a combination of the grasses and the protein in the legumes (alfalfa, clovers). We generally know what the feed value is during the growing months but all winter feeds (hay) are tested for nutritional value."

Another management tactic that Jim uses is the Leader-Follower program. His first 40 heifers (cows that are bred but have not yet had calves) take the top 6 to 8 inches off the pasture stand and then are moved to another paddock. Depending on growing conditions this can be between 1 and 7 days. Then the cows with the calves graze next. The best heifers are kept for breeding to speed the rate that the herd's overall genetics is improved. "It's all about focusing on producing AAA beef for a great eating experience! We provide beef that is healthy for the consumer and great for the land!"



Jim Lintott, producer, presenting to students at University of Manitoba

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## Our Producer List continues to grow:

Jim & Carolyn Lintott:  
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## WHERE TO BUY:

- Vita Health FRESH MARKET Stores
- St. Norbert Market (opening June 2nd)  
Saturdays June 2 - October 27, 8:00 - 3:00  
Wednesdays June 6 - September 26, 12:00 - 6:00
- Crampton's Market (summer)
- St. Leon's Market (summer)
- Humbolts
- Ellice Meats
- Directly from our producers (roasts, steaks and other cuts are available directly from our producers)
- Dining - Fusion Grill Restaurant

## Q & A's

We love to get questions from you about our grass fed beef? These are some of the common questions we get.

- Do we use hormones? No
- Do we use antibiotics? No, all our growers must follow our production protocol which is shown on our website. To read more thorough answers go to our website: [www.manitobagrassfedbeef.ca](http://www.manitobagrassfedbeef.ca) and to the Q & A page.



The Fairmont Hotel is now offering Grass Fed Beef Burgers on their menu. Look for it in the Velvet Glove Restaurant and Lounge as well as their In-Room menu.

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## Meet our growers.....

### Jonathan & Eileen Bouw

Bouw Farms Ltd is a family farm owned and operated by Jonathan, Stefan, and Herman Bouw and their families. Jonathan and Stefan are the third (3rd) generation on this farm, which was established in 1960 when our Grandpa (Opa) bought the land shortly after immigrating from Holland in 1957. Today, Jonathan and Eileen and new baby Lucille, Stefan and Kendra and their two children Jaxon and Mikaya, and Herman and Marilyn are all contributing to the farm, and earning a living from it. Herman considers himself very blessed to have his two sons working with him, supporting their families, and Jonathan and Stefan are excited about the opportunity to farm together as a family.

We are very committed to the land and animals we take care of, and are also actively involved with various Agricultural groups, as Agriculture is very important to us—it's our livelihood! Jonathan is a Director on the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council (MRAC), Stefan is the secretary of the Agassiz Lamb Marketing Coop, and Herman is the Eastern Region Director on the Manitoba Sheep Association. We are also involved in our communities, and are active participants in our local churches, children's programs and music teams.

We raise our cattle on organic pastures, and feed them organic hay, as a part of our organic crop production system. We believe that safe, high quality food can be produced in our pasture-based system, as cattle were designed with 4 stomachs (also known as ruminants) to be able to convert grasses and forages into a high-quality protein product with a minimum of human intervention. Our cattle are not fed antibiotics, nor are they given any synthetic growth promotants such as hormones. We handle the cattle in a low-stress manner, respecting their safety and their natural preferences.

Our farm enterprises include purebred Black & Red Angus cattle, Grass-fed Beef, Natural Lamb production, and Organic crops, including grain for human consumption and forages to feed the animals. It's enough to keep 3 grown men very busy year-round!!

Our Grass fed beef has been receiving rave



Jonathan & Eileen's Wedding 2009

reviews, as people are amazed at its wholesome rich flavour, and luscious tenderness. They are also happy to know that it has been locally raised with wholesome and sustainable farming practices and is supporting young Manitoba Farmers and their growing families!

We are located less than 40 km's from Portage and Main in Winnipeg, and we would love to share a walk around our farm with you, and tell you about why we do what we do! Email us to arrange a visit!

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Stefan & Kendra Bouw (Jaxon & Mikaya)  
Herman & Marilyn Bouw  
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## Meet our grower.... Randy Tkachyk

Randy Tkachyk's grandfather emigrated from Austria to Canada in 1907. He settled south of Sundown on a quarter section along the Canadian and U.S. International Border (approximately 80 km southeast of Steinbach).

Today, Tkachyk's employees (cows) support rural life on the farm. His mother Olga at the age of 84, still lives on the farm, keeps the garden free of weeds and keeps the yard site mowed weekly. When things get busy, help is shared back and forth with the neighbor and three of his friend's children to help out and learn about the livestock.

Tkachyk expects 160 baby calves this May, when the rest of nature's newborns arrive. 70% of Tkachyk's land is owned and 30% is leased to accommodate an extra 160 cow/calf pairs as a custom-grazing program. Cattle are placed into fresh grass approximately every 3 to 5 days (rotational grazing) during the summer months with the help of two border collies.

By selecting for the right cattle genetics and the great grass environment, Tkachyk's cattle have performed beyond his expectations. "The results have proven that we can grow high quality meat on our grass. Our natural beef is also sold to meat shops in Steinbach and Winnipeg."

In 2004 Tkachyk joined forces with Jim Lintott to form the website [www.manitobabeef.com](http://www.manitobabeef.com). "This has been a really good tool to help us market our grass fed beef," says Tkachyk.

The cattle operation is a good fix for the land on his farm. The animals help keep the land healthy, and bale grazing (putting the bales in the pasture in the winter) fertilizes the soil and improves grass production for future grazing seasons.

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Randy's niece feeding donkey



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