

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Grassfed Farmers Create Collaborative Internship Program

“*Don’t just eat it...grow it!*” The opening lines of the grassfedinterns.com website posted by four farms in Upstate New York say it all. In a time when grassfed meat has become one of the hottest culinary trends in the country, and grass-based agriculture has become a great bastion of hope for saving the planet and small agriculture, these four farms have decided it is time to create a hands-on learning opportunity to encourage a new generation to follow in their footsteps (at least down the hedgerows....).

The program, created by the members of MADE in Schoharie County, a community coalition of pasture-based livestock farmers based in Schoharie County, aims to train its first class of interns in every aspect of sustainable meat production from hoof to plate. “We’re in a completely unique position to offer this program,” says Dr. James Hayes, retired professor of Animal Science and proprietor of Sap Bush Hollow Farm, “We have contract graziers and direct marketers among our ranks. Each of the participating farms is licensed to cut their own meat, together we are represented at 10 farmers’ markets throughout the region, as well as at several health food stores and food co-ops. Most of us also operate our own on-farm retail operations, and market the remainder of our products, when necessary, through wholesale venues.”

“There’s more to it than that,” chimes in Dr. Shannon Hayes, James Hayes’ daughter, and author of *The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook*. “The quality of the meat produced by each of these farms is superior. We’ve all heard the periodic criticisms that grassfed meat can be tough, or have an off-flavor. All four farms are known for producing consistently high-quality meat. I’ve tasted meat from all of them. These people have really figured it out.”

Apparently these farmers are serious about helping new farmers figure it out as well, because in addition to providing on-farm work experiences with livestock management, marketing and meat cutting, the farmers have developed a formal curriculum for their students. “We wanted the interns to have a chance to learn the science and philosophy behind what we do,” explains Carol Clement of Heather Ridge Farm, the program coordinator, “and we wanted to make sure they had an opportunity to socialize with one another, and to share ideas.” Toward that end, the group has organized a series of 8 learning modules that will be presented to the students every 2 weeks throughout the growing season, with lessons in everything from Holistic Management, to business management and marketing, to whole farm and family monitoring, holistic herd health, pasture management and meat science. The learning modules will also be open to the public, explains Clement, “We want to get as many farmers participating as possible, because we think it will really enrich the learning experience for the interns.”

While small for the first year, Shannon Hayes, who coordinates MADE in Schoharie County, explained that they are eager for the program to quickly outgrow the group. “We

want to build a regional program of national importance, eventually welcoming participating farms from Schoharie, Albany, Delaware, Montgomery, Otsego and Greene Counties, and we're hoping one of the county extension services will take an interest in managing it." The farmers have recruited Mick Bessire of Greene County Cooperative Extension as a technical advisor. Mr. Bessire will oversee the learning contracts, as well as work as a liaison between the farmers and the students.

The program, designed to last fifteen weeks, will run from Mid-May through Mid-August. Host farms will be Sap Bush Hollow of West Fulton, Heather Ridge of Preston Hollow, Nagimor of Warnerville, and Sweet Tree of Carlisle. Students who have a high school degree and some college experience are encouraged to apply. They can learn more about it by visiting www.grassfedinterns.com, or by calling Carol Clement at (518) 239-6234.

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Please note, the following press release is in two formats – a short version, and a longer story. Please feel free to choose one or both!

LOCAL LIVESTOCK FARMERS ANNOUNCE SUMMER WORKSHOP SERIES AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The farmers of MADE in Schoharie County are pleased to welcome the first class of students to their inaugural season of the Grassfed Interns program, a collaborative effort designed to pair next generation farmers interested in sustainable agriculture and grass-fed livestock with successful pasture-based farms.

As part of the interns' curriculum, the farmers of MADE have coordinated a summer workshop series addressing topics pertinent to pasture-based farming. The full-day workshops are open to the general public, and include lunch (last-minute walk-ins are always welcome, but lunch cannot be guaranteed without pre-registration). Unless otherwise noted, all workshops are \$35. For specific details about instructors, course descriptions and locations, see www.grassfedinterns.com. Farmers from Schoharie or neighboring counties interested in joining the program and hosting an intern for the 2007 season should contact Carol Clement of Heather Ridge Farm at (518) 239-6234.

Holistic Management

Sunday June 4th, 9am-3pm
Northland Sheep Dairy, Marathon, NY
Karl North, Instructor

Introduction to Meat Science

Sunday June 11th, 10am-3pm
Nagimor Farm and Kennel, Warnerville, NY
Eric Shelley and Dr. Shannon Hayes, Instructors

Regional Farm Market Tour

Saturday July 15th, 8:30am-12:30pm (workshop fee is \$10, bring a bag lunch)
Tour convenes at Sap Bush Hollow Farm, West Fulton, NY
James and Adele Hayes, Instructors

Monitoring the Farm and Family Ecosystem

Monday, July 24th, 6pm-9pm (workshop fee is \$10, includes coffee and dessert)
Sap Bush Hollow Farm, West Fulton, NY
Robert Hooper and Dr. Alan Hutchins, D.C., Instructors

Grazing Land Management

Sunday July 30th, 10am-3pm

Sap Bush Hollow Farm, West Fulton

Troy Bishopp, Dr. James Hayes, Mick Bessire, Instructors

Holistic Financial Management

Sunday, August 6th, 10am-3pm

Agroforestry Resource Center, Acra, NY (Greene County)

Seth Wilner and Phil Metzger, Instructors

Business and Marketing Plans for Grass-fed Farming

Sunday, August 20th, 10am-3pm

Agroforestry Resource Center, Acra, NY (Greene County)

Adele Hayes and Carol Clement, Instructors

Holistic Animal Health

TBA