

1) Pride of Vermont Farms was originally going to be a "coop" of goat producers that would use kid for the making of sausages. The reason for this, was that there were no markets for kid in the state and that by putting it into sausage, perhaps consumers would be more willing to eat kid.

2) The original two ~~grantees~~ grantees, along with two other collaborators experimented with a few recipes, and tried to pull together a membership. Unfortunately, none of these four people had organizing skills, nor previous experience with value-added products, nor any marketing skills... so after one year it began to totally fall apart.

3) One of the grantees called me and asked me if I could take over this project. FYI... from the beginning I attended their meetings, more as an advisor, than as a participant/member. They never listened to me - so I walked away from it. (I have 15 years of running my own farm and 10 years experience of working on farms, here in Vermont and 2 years of farm experience in France. I have marketed vegetables, cheese, meat, wool and wool products... and have known successes + failures) lots of them!

I agreed to take this on, because I always felt that it was a good project, albeit, a difficult one.

4) I brought on one other person to help with a budget, and a pricing scheme.

5) We put together a budget for making sausage, but this time we added beef and lamb in order to make the numbers work. ~~AA~~ We did not know the yield of meat from hanging weight to cubed. We had to guess. The Dept of ag didn't have this info, nor did the USDA. Also, part of our pricing scheme involved the cost of processing the meat at the slaughterhouse. When we did this, Brault's quoted us \$32 for kid and \$37 for lamb.

6) After we had our budget and prices, we contacted the folks who had showed an interest in the group the year before. So we solidified that, with standards for raising the meat, membership fees, and the price that would be paid to the producers for their animals. We then became an LLC, because coops are too expensive. We developed a label and developed a greek style sausage.

7) Summer 2001... the first animals were run through Brault's and they had changed their minds about the cost of processing. It got changed to \$42 & \$47. Next batch \$47 & \$52, by fall they were \$57. This threw the whole project into a tailspin, so producers were promised a certain \$/#/carcass. POV had to pay this fee until another \$ figure could be evoted on by the group. POV was then in the hole by \$7000! I lost a lot of sleep! I had applied for a grant through the Dept of Ag, in the spring. I was after "start-up" operating capital. We were denied the grant

be cause we were too small and because we were going to market our product in Vermont. I thought about suicide at this point and called Louise Calderwood & begged her to reconsider. Me and POV were in bad, desperate shape.

8) I couldn't get a loan... we had no collateral. I couldn't find another grant. This involved over a month of phone calls, letters & internet research. Sooo. I borrowed the money from two friends. POV is paying it back slowly.

9) The sausage was a poor-to slow seller. I had to ~~switch~~ switch over to cuts of lamb in August. I used the Vt Fresh Network to find these buyers. The sausage sells well at the farmer's markets and at a few coops, but restaurants wouldn't buy it. We did demos at the coops. I gave the sausage to the Vt. Fresh Network host restaurant for the annual meeting. A friend cooked up tons of mousaka for the meal and the jerks wouldn't serve it. We found it in the cooler with a note on it "for the staff". I was livid!!!

from August through November I tried to formulate a whole new budget and pricing scheme. The problem was varying carcass weights with fixed slaughter house fee. So you could not assign a fixed \$ figure, is what it boiled down to. Then one day when I was putting someones animals in the freezer and inventorying it, I jotted down a \$/# figure by the cuts.

I then added these up and did ~~deductions~~ <sup>#</sup> deductions versus %.  
It was like a light bulb went off. It all came into focus. By paying the producer for these cuts, there are ~~no~~ no longer any variables. POV markets cuts not carcasses. Each carcass yields differently. Each breed of sheep yields differently. So when we had our meeting in the winter, after all the animals went through, we discussed this type of payment schedule, the group agreed to go this way. The 2002 projected budget will end at a plus \$2350!! This includes a small stipend being paid to myself and my neighbor, La Donna for running the business. Enclosed with the report are some samples of producer pay sheets. We are also keeping track of % of cuts and cost analysis figures. I've tried to get the dept of ag to look at these, but they won't. These "cut %s" should be helpful to the producers for choosing their breeding stock. FYI the "POV cut" \$ figure comes from the number of animals that were pre-promised to the group in the spring divided into \$3000, which is the cost of running POV for one year. Those costs being 1) storage rental space for 3 freezers (including electricity) 2) product insurance 3) phone bills 4) office supplies 5) product for samples

10) I always wanted that POV have 2-3 different kinds of sausages. You're probably wondering why sausage, when it's so slow to move. Well, with every animal, you have trim (approx 15% of every carcass is trim), so you just gotta deal with it.

Anyway, this summer I decided that we needed to make a move on sausage #2. It would be merguez, as we had worked on it before we settled on the greek style sausage "Loukmitra". I called the spice company that made our <sup>custom</sup> Loukmitra spice mix, but they were not interested in doing a custom merguez spice mix. It took me about a month to find another spice company willing to do it and willing to make a small batch for us. (Meaning 100 pounds vs 300 pounds) I, personally, bought the spice thinking I could get paid back when it sold. We now have the spices and the approval from the dept of ag and we are waiting for Brault's to find the time to make it.

11) As for the goats, we now run them through VQM and concentrate solely on lamb. With the cost of slaughtering kids and the small yield, the \$ figure per pound is too cost prohibitive.

As for <sup>the</sup> outreach program, I have given two workshops. I wanted to be part of a workshop that the dept of ag is putting on this winter for meat processing, but they don't want me. These slaughter house fees are outrageous! Brault's went up to \$59.50 in November. He said his electric rates went up. Meat processing is almost like milk processing ... they have total control over the market. We meat people are going to need to be subsidized soon in order to keep us competitive. Last winter I helped Brault's obtain a permit to compost his offal. He said that was the biggest cost in our processing fee. Well, he got the permit, but the costs didn't come down. He said it costs him just as much to compost it. I asked the dept of ag to work with him on a cost analysis of composting, but they won't.

As part of the outreach program, I am applying for the SARE Sustainable Farmer Educator program.

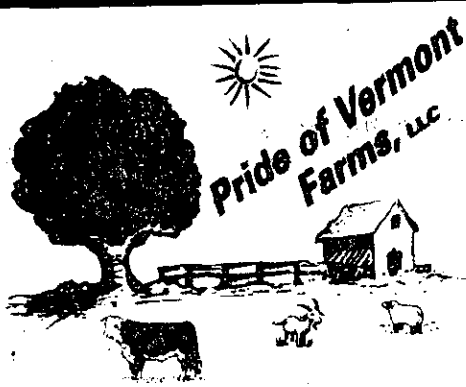
## Lessons Learned

- 1) a marketing group can not be started by people (farmers) who are new to the marketing world
- 2) no group should start up without working capital...  
minimum needed \$25,000
- 3) only a small percentage of Vt Fresh Network restaurants are real players.
- 4) there needs to be help for groups when they run into \$ trouble. I had no where to turn for help. No where to get a loan. No where to get another grant. No support period.

this group survived only because of my stubbornness.

Lami Fondiller

Dec 14 2002



**P**ride of Vermont Farms, LLC is proud to raise our lamb, kid & beef the old-fashioned way...on small family farms.

**O**ur producer's guarantee:

- No antibiotics
- Limited use of herbicides & pesticides
- No hormones
- Minimal use of chemical fertilizers

**V**ermont tender meats. Our philosophy--feed the best grain & pasture and you will have the most nutritious, tender & appetizing meats available.

**F**armers who are stewards of the land & care about producing premium quality meats for your table.

## **Participating Farms**

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**Does' Leap • Bakersfield, VT • (802) 827-3046; e-mail: georgevv@together.net**

Does' Leap is a small goat dairy located in Bakersfield. Owners Kristan Doolan & George van Vlaanderen produce certified organic farmstead cheese that is marketed locally at farmer's markets, to restaurants and through CSA shares. They produce cheese seasonally. Their goats eat a wide range of grasses and browse, giving their milk and meat a unique flavor.

**Selina Hunter/Dwight Brunnette • Newport Center, VT • (802) 334-8324; fax (802) 933-9535**

A misplaced midwesterner and a country veterinarian have teamed up on a Newport Center hillside farm to raise goats and a growing family. Ike and Selena moved to Vermont six years ago and have been slowly rehabing a turn of the century farmstead into a small goat farm with a special interest in Oberhasli and Alpine goats.

**Lazy Lady Farm • Westfield, VT • (802) 744-6365; e-mail: shaw@sover.net**

Lazy Lady Farm is nestled in the heart of the Northeast Kingdom. Now in it's 15th year, it has been certified organic since it's beginning. The farm is greatly diversified, featuring goats and Laine Fondiller's, award-winning goat cheeses. Sheep are raised for wool and meat. Hereford cattle are a new addition to the farm. Pigs and free-range chickens are raised during the summer. Much is done on this small piece of land, with quality and stewardship being the main objective.

**Long Field Farm • Cabot, VT • (802) 563-2999; e-mail: kokorock@sover.net**

Long Field Farm began in 1996 with three mixed breed dairy goats. Currently thirty milkers produce quality milk and kids. Grazed in spring, summer and fall, the herd is fed hay grown on the Long Field and Canadian grain. All kids are hand-raised by owners Lynn Rockwell, Martha Rockwell & Roman Kokodyniak. Kids are introduced to grazing at one month of age, with primary attention paid to the health and well-being of each goat.

**Milk & Honey Acres • Holland, VT • (802) 895-4894; e-mail: bkpine@together.net**

Ken & Barbara Pine operate Milk & Honey Acres. They are a fledgling micro-farm offering a healthy home for their 2 children and clean food to the public. They currently raise beef, chicken, eggs, vegetables, maple syrup and honey.

**Missisquoi Farm • Richford, VT • (802) 848-3771; e-mail: chester.parsons@uvm.edu**

Missisquoi Farm is owned and operated by Chet & Kate Parsons. Nestled between Jay Peak and the Canadian border, its 200 acres produces an abundance of grass that is co-grazed by sheep and replacement dairy heifers. All of the animals produced on the farm are totally grass fed without the use of hormones or antibiotics.

**My Farm • No. Troy, VT • (802) 988-4059; e-mail: gillian1@together.net**

My Farm is owned & operated solely by Gillian Byrne. Finn/Dorset cross ewes graze on pastures tucked away on the hillsides overlooking the Canadian border. In order to diversify this small farm, dairy replacement heifers are also raised.

**Wild Blue Acres • Holland, VT • (802) 895-5317; e-mail: tavona@together.net**

Owners Julie & Tony Avona describe their 21 peaceful acres on the Canadian border as "a baby farm with big ideas." Julie, a 4-H goat leader, enjoys teaching others about the pleasures of goat ownership and strongly believes in natural alternative health care for her growing herd.

**Willow Hill Farm • Milton, VT • (802) 893-1954; e-mail: wsmart@together.net**

Willow Hill Farm, a small family farm, raises natural grass-fed lamb on their lush hillside pastures located in the foothills of the Green Mountains. Owners Willow Smart & Dave Phinney strongly believe in providing lamb raised in the European tradition-grass-fed, harvested young while still lean, tender, and exceptionally delicate.

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**Pride of Vermont Farms, LLC • 973 Snyder Brook Road • Westfield, VT 05874 • (802) 744-6365 • e-mail: shaw@sover.net**



## **PRIDE OF VERMONT FARMS MISSION STATEMENT**

**This organization seeks to establish price stability for commodity meats grown in Vermont by creating and marketing value-added products.**

### **Our primary objectives are:**

- To maximize returns to members by adding value to their product(s).
- To create products for both local and niche markets for goat and lamb.
- To establish growing and finishing standards to ensure a consistent product.
- To educate members to ensure a consistent product.
- To provide enough product to meet demand.
- To monitor quality assurance in the marketing chain to sustain confidence in our products.

### **Our future objectives are:**

- To monitor and disseminate research in carcass quality, breeding, and profitability.
- To work with other Vermont food and marketing organizations for mutual benefit.
- To foster communication and community among our members.
- To raise the profile of the goat and lamb industry.
- To work closely with processors to meet our needs.
- To become recognized for producing a quality product with a guaranteed supply.

*Pride of Vermont Farms is a cooperative of Vermont farmers producing goats, lamb and beef on small family farms. We use no growth hormones or feedlot antibiotics.*

Dawn Morin Boucher

Laini Fondiller

Packed for:



**Pride of Vermont Farms, LLC**

Westfield, VT 05874  
(802) 744-6365

Packed for:



**Pride of Vermont Farms, LLC**

Westfield, VT 05874  
(802) 744-6365

Product:



LLP  
S.

Net Wt.



**KEEP REFRIGERATED OR FROZEN**

**Safe Handling Instructions:** This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.

Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.

Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.

Cook thoroughly. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

Net

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