

FNE02-419 Interim Report
Educating Consumers and Chefs about Lesser Cuts of Meat Through a Grass-fed Meats Day

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Project Goals:

Hold a Grassfed Meats Day that will involve ten chefs, and be attended by at least 150 consumers.

Sell \$2,000 worth of meat from four participating farms as a result of the event.

Prepare a “how-to” booklet for farmers interested in holding their own event.

Farm Update:

Since early 2002, our farm has doubled its production. We will raise 40 pigs, 50 veal calves, 20 lambs, 100 turkeys, and 500 chickens in 2003. We continue to market meats from the Meadow Raised Meats Co-operative. We added several large customers in 2002 that will allow us to market 35-50 grassfed beef cows in 2003 – a three-fold increase. At this point demand is far exceeding supply. We will continue to improve our pastures to increase their carrying capacity, but we desperately need more good grassfarmers to work with us to fill the demand for quality grassfed beef.

Project Cooperators:

Dina Falconi and Jen Prosser have been hired as our events coordinators. They are active in the community and have put together events in Ulster County from lectures to workshops dealing with nutrition, wellness, herbs, etc. Dina and Jen have forged a relationship with Eppworth Farm, a Methodist retreat center in Ulster County. Eppworth has agreed to co-sponsor the event and will allow us to use their extensive facilities. The location is ideal for any number of people, up to 1,000!

Jack’s Meats in New Paltz is a store committed to natural meats and will help to publicize the event and will continue to be an outlet for grassfed meats, making it easier for consumers to find the product after the event.

Chef Ric Orlando, owner of New World Home Cooking is the president of the Hudson Valley Chefs Collaborative chapter. Ric is helping us get chefs involved, and will be a draw for the event, as he has a popular restaurant, a cooking show on public TV, and a cookbook.

Results & Accomplishments to Date:

- Project coordinators hired
- Site chosen
- Date chosen: September 20th

We have been running into difficulty finding other farmers who wish to participate in the event. Apparently farms in New York are either a) not interested in raising truly grassfed beef and/or b) raising and selling as much as they would like to. We have run an ad in the Regional Farm and Food Project newsletter and have contacted the Northeast Livestock Association, looking for potential farmer participants. A lack of committed farms will limit the supply of meat for this event to much less than 10 chefs would need to prepare for 150-500 attendees.

The other issue we're having trouble dealing with is time! We have worked with our coordinators and laid out initial plans for a "fair" type of event, complete with a chef recipe contest, other foods, live animal exhibits, and speakers about grass-fed meats. This will be a lot to pull together by September of 2003. However, Ulster County is the perfect location for an annual event – with a committed core of grassfed meat consumers and many others interested in learning more. The area is not too far from points further Upstate in NY to make it difficult for farmers to deliver meat to the area and develop direct relationships with stores and consumers. The festival organizers and host location want us to continue ahead with plans for a festival, as there is a good deal of interest in the community.

Proposed Project Revisions:

After discussing the farmer participation and time issues with the coordinators and other participants, we will plan on moving forward with our original project goals. If we can't find enough farmer participation by Feb. 15th, we will scale the project back to a dinner or tasting, prepared by participating chefs, with a talk by an author with knowledge of grassfed meats.

If we need to scale the festival down to a smaller tasting for the first annual event, we will want to revise the project goals:

- 3-5 participating chefs
- 50-100 attendees
- Immediate economic benefit to at least 3 participating farms: \$1500

Rather than a "festival", we would have a tasting, accompanied by a talk about preparing lesser cuts of meat and a cookbook signing by a chef and/or a farm author.

We will prepare for attendees a primer to buying and preparing grassfed meats. We will prepare a follow-up report for other farmers.