

JFF Newsletter - February 2009

Dear JFF Friends & Customers,

Greetings! We hope February finds you well. We wanted to bring you up-to-date on:

- news about our farm,
- a job posting we are running, and
- a couple of "Reports from Farmer Norm," as follows, and
- please see our website's photo gallery for pictures.

JFF Beef Now at Prairie Harvest in Newton:

Check Out Our New Green & Brown Sticker

We are happy to say you now have the option of purchasing select cuts of our 100% grass-fed beef at Prairie Harvest in Newton. Look for our new sticker on the packages. It's a white circle with grassy-green color edging, a brown "LJ" branding-iron mark in the middle, and brown lettering, and you can see it at our "Guide to Slaughter, Cuts and Cooking" here: www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/slaughtercutscooking.html.

Check out Prairie Harvest at www.prairieharvestnewton.com and their newsletter, which mentions our products at <http://www.prairieharvestnewton.com/parts/pdf/phfeb09.pdf>.

New Flyer on JFF 100% Grass-Fed Beef on Website

To see our new flyer on grass-fed beef, go to: www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/2009grassfedbeefflyer.html.

JFF In the News

In case you missed it over the holidays, JFF and Farm Manager Norm made it into ***The Hutchinson News***! For Amy Bickel's story on them both, entitled "A Beef Effort Gains Ground: Man Leading Farm Near Newton Is Part Of Grass-Fed Movement, Which Is Growing With Customers," published on Dec. 24, 2008, go to: www.hutchnews.com/Localregional/beefsiri.

The piece generated some interesting responses on the website and subsequently, ***The Hutchinson News*** also printed an editorial, entitled "What's for dinner?: Growing popularity of natural beef good for animals and humans." You can see a reprint published on the following website (We were unable to find the link on The Hutch News website.): www.wichitafood.coop/news-natural-beef.php.

JFF Seeking Intern(s) for Farmers Market Season

JFF is looking for a summer intern or interns (individual and /or couple). (Feel free to forward this message.)

Time Frame: 3-6 months, April thru Sept.

Description:

We are a diversified cattle and grain farm with a small grass-fed herd of red and black Angus.

Presently we are in our second year of transition to having our grain certified organic.

We also have a small, licensed flour mill on site!

We desire to expand our efforts towards local, value-added food production.

Primary duties will include:

- establishment of a moderate-sized vegetable garden with focus geared towards farmers market production;
- attendance at three-to-four area farmers markets a week
- deliveries of beef, grain /flour and garden products to several area health food stores
- possible poultry opportunity
- exploration of potential winter vegetable production

Secondary duties will include:

- assistance with calving
- general farm work

Requirements:

references

Terms:

Housing will be provided; salary and benefits negotiable.

Easy access to I-35, I-135 & I-70

Easy access to Amtrak in Newton

Contact: normo@elbingks.com or norm@janzenfamilyfarms.com.

Latest Testimonial

"Last evening, I fired up the grill and had a couple of JFF's large NY strip steaks thawed and ready....They were absolutely wonderful. Lots of flavor, tender, and there was none left over."

— Jack Hofman, customer

Report from Farmer Norm:

KS Cattlemen Discuss Consolidation of Beef Industry

I recently attended the Kansas Cattlemen's Association (KCA) meeting in Salina, where one of the hottest topics was the intensifying concentration of the beef market, both nationally and internationally. The problem with the consolidation is that small-scale farmers lose control over their livelihoods, and consumers lose choices. Cattle prices tend to be lower as concentration in the market rises. Too few companies controlling one business lead to market distortions. Where are our anti-trust laws?

At the meeting, it was noted that Brazilian company JBS, the world's largest meatpacker, has acquired the fourth- and fifth-largest U.S. meatpackers in the past year-and-a-half (Swift and Smithfield), and it is attempting to purchase yet another (National Beef), which is the third-largest. (The National Beef deal, however, has not yet been finalized, pending regulatory approval.). JBS says it now has worldwide daily slaughtering capacity of about 65,000 head of cattle a day. It happens to also be the third-largest pork producer in the U.S., with a slaughtering capacity of about 48,000 a day.

Even before JBS' involvement in the U.S. market, however, the beef industry had been consolidating for years, such that the vast majority of U.S. beef is raised, slaughtered and packed by a small number of very large companies. (These also include Cargill and Tyson.)

Consumers can help stop this trend – which is problematic for our economy, our families and our environment -- by buying meat from their neighbors, whom they trust. Thanks to all of you who are already doing so.

Details of JBS' recent consolidations are as follows:

- **SMITHFIELD**, Oct. 23, 2008: JBS S.A. announces it completed the purchase of the beef unit of Smithfield Group (Smithfield Beef) as well as their feedlot operations known as Five Rivers. Smithfield was the fourth-largest U.S. beef packer.
- **NATIONAL BEEF**, March 4, 2008: JBS S.A. announces it signed an agreement to purchase National Beef, the third-largest U.S. beef packer (with a beef processing plant in Dodge City and another in Liberal). In fiscal year 2007, National Beef generated sales of \$5.6 billion and processed 3.9 million head of cattle, the company notes.

- **SWIFT**, July 12, 2007: JBS S.A. announces it completed the acquisition of the Swift & Co, the third-largest process of fresh beef and pork products in the world (and at the time, the fifth-largest U.S. beef packer), making JBS Swift Group the largest beef processor in the world.

Report from Farmer Norm:

KS Graziers Talk “Mob Grazing”

At the recent winter meeting of the Kansas Graziers Association, one of the most interesting things they talked about was mob grazing, in which there are a phenomenal number of head on a very small patch, and then the cattle are moved to a new patch often. The stocking rate is much higher, but it actually improves the land, rather than overtax it. What gets trampled seems to build the soil and hold it. This part of the world used to be covered with buffalo. The buffalo would move onto a range and literally devour it, and move on. Maybe there’s something to be learned from that.

We also talked about forage quality, holistic management, the “functional cow,” and other methods of grazing. Terry Gompert, extension educator with the University of Nebraska, stressed that the producer should do what works for his or her own particular circumstances. (For more on Gompert’s discussion, see a summary of it by Mark Parker at the Kansas Rural Center here: www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications/KRC20090122NR.pdf .)

More than 100 people, mostly from Kansas, attended the conference, held in Assaria. Ranchers were generally trying to figure out how to better utilize their resources and produce more pounds of beef with the resources they have (without lots of inputs).

Thanks for your continued support. Please feel free to contact us anytime.

Best regards,

The Janzens and the Oedings

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