

## **JFF Newsletter - September 2010**

### **Dear Friends & Customers:**

Please find below some of our latest news on beef, organic certification, Facebook, beef tongue, grilling on osage orange coals, native grass plantings, Little Red Hen Bakery, and more. (If you're having trouble with the photo links in this email, you can also go to the photo page on our website at <http://www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/photos.html>.)

### **JFF 100% Grass-Fed Beef Ready for Your Table**

We recently slaughtered a steer, and another one is coming down the pike, so now's the time to get your order in to ensure you receive the cuts you want.

Please don't hesitate to ask if you have special requests or questions (ask Kristi at [kristi@janzenfamilyfarms.com](mailto:kristi@janzenfamilyfarms.com) or Norm at [norm@janzenfamilyfarms.com](mailto:norm@janzenfamilyfarms.com)). Bulk orders are likely to get you the best deal. Many customers find they can manage a bulk order by getting together with a friend or neighbor or two. Also, for bulk orders, we can likely arrange a drop-off – especially if you're in the Newton-Lawrence-Topeka corridor – so let us know what your needs are. For more information on our beef, go here:

- Our main beef page: [www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef.html](http://www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef.html).
- Our beef flyer: [www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/images/JFF\\_100\\_Grass-Fed Beef Flyer 2010.pdf](http://www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/images/JFF_100_Grass-Fed_Beef_Flyer_2010.pdf).
- Our guide to slaughter, cuts and cooking: [www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/slaughtercutscoking.html](http://www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/slaughtercutscoking.html).
- Our prices and order form: [www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/beefpricesorderform.html](http://www.janzenfamilyfarms.com/grassfedbeef/beefpricesorderform.html).

### **JFF Receives Organic Certification for Cropland**

After three years of transition – and a long time it seems to the waiting farm family! – we are excited to announce that our cropland received organic certification this year. This means that we are now not only growing and harvesting our own certified organic wheat, but we are freshly milling it on site at Henry Creek Flour Mill as well. Previously, we already sold and milled certified organic wheat, but we obtained the organic wheat from other farms, most notably the Kingman County farm of Norm Oeding, our farm manager at JFF. Now, going forward, we will be able to use our own certified organic wheat as well as that from a few other certified organic Kansas farms, when needed. Other crops that we produce, such as milo and soybeans, will carry the official status of certified organic as well.

As some of you know, we started this process in 2007 by documenting our commitment to organic sustainability. One of the basic requirements is the elimination of artificial chemical inputs (such as synthetic fertilizer or chemical pesticides and herbicides), which must be removed from the production process for at least three years prior to

certification. Another basic requirement to certify cropland is the practice of crop rotation.

Our certified organic cropland is now in line with the Janzen Family Farms prairie (native grassland that has never been plowed), which we were able to get certified organic in 2008. ([Click here to see John Janzen with grandchildren in JFF organic milo](#), and [here to see Farm Manager Norm Oeding's dog Chicago in JFF organic alfalfa](#).)

### **We're on Facebook**

We're hoping to help keep in touch with friends and customers through our new Facebook page. Please check us out here: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Newton-KS/Janzen-Family-Farms/104855429573431>. Don't forget to "like" us! (Thanks!)

### **Trying Beef Tongue (A Treat!)**

Some may consider beef tongue worth eating only because it's one of the most economical meat cuts, but don't tell that to the Europeans who savor it as a tasty delicacy. Either way, you may be surprised how delicious it tastes. One of the Janzens (Bernd, who happens to be my husband) was thrilled to receive it as his birthday dinner. Perhaps because he spent a lot of time in Germany, he knows beef tongue as a treat. So his sister Gesine and I prepared it two ways, one boiled with a raisin sauce and the other slow-cooked in a crock pot. It was a hit at the big meal for the extended family. Our nine-year-old son actually snapped up some of the last pieces on one of the serving plates, afraid he wouldn't get enough. The broth that resulted in the crock-pot version was especially delicious – and incredibly easy to prepare too. I'll warn you that peeling the tongue after it's boiled is a little yucky, but it's worth it. Really. -- Kristi ([Click here to see one version of the tongue](#), and [here to see the other](#).)

### **Grilling Steaks Directly On Hedgewood Coals**

For a different take on grilling steaks, try putting your meat directly into the coals. Some of us Janzens (and Regiers) tried this at our August family reunion and we would like to suggest it. The hint of the wood adds a unique flavor twist. It's also a lot of fun. Of course, you have to be careful not to leave the meat in very long at all, as the high heat of the burning osage orange wood cooks the meat fast. With a nice crispy layer on the outside, and a rare center, our steaks had an ultra-seared quality that you just can't get on a grill. ([Click here to see the steaks in the coals](#), and [here to see slices after grilling](#).)

### **Special Report from John: Native Grass Plantings at JFF**

An important feature of JFF's transition to organic and grass-fed beef production has been the conversion of about 40 acres of cropland to native prairie grasses. We are benefiting from a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Environment Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) grant to pay for seeds and planting, as well as other cropping initiatives. The tract of land we selected for this establishment of prairie grass is located between several other disconnected patches of grass: our 38 acre tract of virgin native prairie, and another 12 acre tract that had been prairie but was over seeded to brome about 25 years ago; and a lowland area along the creek that flows

from yet another brome pasture across the road to the north. The new prairie area has been planted in strips between terraces. When complete, these various plantings will create a grazing “corridor” that is adjacent to cropland that can also be used for winter forage and combined grain or grazing applications.

As ecologists and prairie botanists have pointed out, a parcel of land seeded to native grasses and forbs is not a prairie. It lacks many of the subtle features of the native prairie ecosystem, such as bacterial “companions” to particular plants that provide nutrients, and other microorganisms that exist in a true prairie. Furthermore, and confirmed by our experience, pre-existing undesirable “weeds” do not just vanish. Our USDA supervisor, Justin Kniesel, advises us to not graze cattle on the new grass in the first two years, and in the third only to do “flash” grazing. During this time prairie plants are establishing their root structures, they are producing their own seeds that then sprout in subsequent years, until a firmer, denser sod is established. In time the native perennials will win out over alien annuals. This three-year delay before a prairie reconstruction can be grazed also has economic implications, so the lack of “yield” for three years is really the cost of establishing a prairie.

But the emergence of such a facsimile prairie is a joy to behold. Last spring as I was mowing a second year patch, I roused deer, pheasant and a red-tail hawk. In preparation for this writing I walked across this same patch with a camera. I could see (and tried to photograph for you) side-oats grama, little bluestem, big bluestem, Indian grass, and switchgrass. That is an ideal situation. In other areas, there are still only a few native plants, with many more pigweeds, (native) sunflowers, crabgrass, various sorghums from past plantings, and lots of (native) cottonwood seedlings.

(For photos of our grasses, click on the following links: [Reinhild with big blue stem](#); [prairie reconstruction in the second year](#); and [prairie reconstruction looking south](#). To identify specific grasses, go here: [http://www.kswildflower.org/grass\\_index.php](http://www.kswildflower.org/grass_index.php).)

### **Report from Norm**

On August 28, I had the honor of providing a short tour for Brenda and Kent M. here at JFF. Brenda has been acquiring whole grain wheat berries from us for several years, as she likes to mill her own flour. She had previously indicated to her husband, Kent, that she would someday like to see an organic farm operation. Kent contacted me and requested a tour as a surprise birthday present for Brenda.

And was she ever surprised! It was a warm, sunny Saturday afternoon when they arrived. We started off by observing the heifers here at the farmstead, then off to see some crops, a short explanation of our crop rotations, then on to see the steers on our brome meadow and the main herd in the far pasture. We concluded the excursion with a short visit of our flour mill facility.

I would especially like to thank Kent and Brenda for including Janzen Family Farms as part of their personal celebration.

### **Blog Mentions JFF**

In her most recent blog, Paula Miller, a “local food” enthusiast, is showcasing products from Janzen Family Farms and Little Red Hen Bakery. Check it out here: <http://lovelocalfood.blogspot.com:80/>. Thanks, Paula!

### **New Label on Little Red Hen Bakery Bread**

When you're out at local retailers, keep your eyes peeled for Little Red Hen Bakery's new bread label. It now reads “Produced Exclusively for and Distributed by Janzen Family Farms; Newton, Kansas,” reflecting the cooperation between JFF and JFF Farm Manager Norm Oeding, who developed the line of bread before working for JFF. You'll note the LJ brand mark and our web address on the label as well. ([To see the new label on bread, click here.](#))

### **Thanks**

Having just managed to gather more than 40 relatives (and a few friends) for another Janzen Family Reunion in Kansas in August, we are incredibly grateful for our friends, family and community. As always, we would like to thank you, our customers, as well, because you are one of the keys to our continued existence as a family farm. ([For a picture of the family at the Janzen Family Reunion, click here.](#))