



Ashton Glen Farm

Organic Grassfed Angus

Dave and Diane Smith

www.ashtonglenfarm.ca

Newsletter Spring 2008

Greetings from Ashton Glen Farm and Happy Spring! It has been quite a winter, and just as snow removal has been such a large issue in the city, we have spent a considerable amount of time moving snow at the farm and are very much looking forward to the change in season and new activities. The good news is that all this moisture will replenish the water table which was getting quite low after last years late summer and fall

dry conditions. Let's hope for an orderly melt off so that all that H2O gets distributed nicely into the water table.

Expanding the Cattle Herd

We were so pleased with the response to our beef last year at the Landsdowne market. Your enthusiasm and patronage has allowed us to plan for expansion. We have been working at doubling the herd since last summer and making investments in infrastructure to accommodate that. In the fall we added several kilometers of new fencing and extended the cattle's water to the bottom of the farm to further our rotational grazing abilities. Where last year we rotated among 6 pastures, for this year we divided that same land into 16. The goal is to increase pasture productivity by 100%. More intensive rotational grazing will improve the root system for the grasses due to longer rest times between pasturing, give better manure (fertilizer) distribution, improve carbon sequestering in the bio mass (**think green**), and result in happier animals whose natural instinct is to roam from pasture to pasture (albeit organized by us).

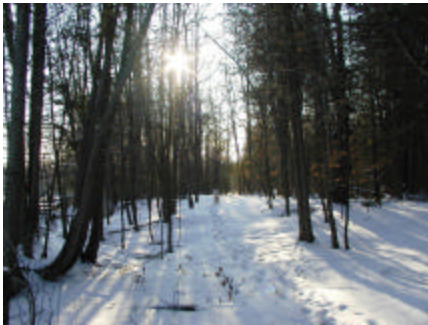


Ashton Glen Farm adds Pork

Ashton Glen Farm has **added pigs** to the mix, on a small scale of course. We have a small drove of Yorkshire-Duroc cross who are currently in the barn anxiously awaiting the warmer weather. They will go out on pasture as soon as the ground greens and firms up to romp and root, quite a difference to the regime at factory farms where most all pork comes from. We also have found a country butcher who has a smoker and can make bacon and hams that we feel taste out of this world and completely different than what you might be used to. The pork will be available at the market later this summer if you would like to try it. We are looking forward to your feedback.



Recommended Reading



One of the pleasures that can be enjoyed in the winter time when the days are shorter and much of the natural environment is resting is reading. Diane and I have gone through quite a few this year. If you will permit us, on the subject of food there are a couple of books I would like to recommend.

The **Omnivore's Dilemma** by Michael Pollan is a very well written book about the "dilemma" of food choice for us omnivores. He has done the research and shares his journey of discovery as to where food comes from in North America in a non alarmist manner. It opens your eyes as to what has happened to food production in the last sixty years and what choices you are faced with. It will definitely enlighten you, but a warning, it will change the way you think about food and what you eat (in a good way), guaranteed.



A most **excellent cookbook** on the subject of meat preparation is Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's **The River Cottage Meat Book**. He organizes his book around the 4 basic methods of cooking meat, ie, roasting, braising, fast cooking and barbeque and explains each process in detail. We learned a lot about the how and why and are better cooks for it.

Chicken and Eggs

Many of you asked us about chicken at the market last year. Although we don't do poultry our neighbours, Shawn and Jo'Anne Cassidy, are now selling organic eggs and chicken from their farm near Ashton. Eggs are available all year round, and chicken will be ready towards the end of June. You can contact them at 613-253-0421.

2008 Market



We are currently planning on being back at the Ottawa Farmer's Market at Lansdowne Park between mid and late July. The exact date depends on weather and when those pastures get dry and green so we will update you closer to the season and let you know how things are progressing. **We look forward to continuing to bring you food that tastes fantastic, is good for you, and good for the planet.**

Enjoy your Spring And just think, in a few short weeks, things should be looking like this !



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