



Ashton Glen Farm

Organic Grassfed Angus

Dave and Diane Smith

www.ashtonglenfarm.ca

Newsletter Summer 2008



We wish you well this summer and hope you are enjoying the warm weather that arrived last week. For us it meant the start of haying season. As of July 10th we are half done, with 50 tons



baled and the rest to come off in the next week or so (see Haying 101 below). It always amazes me, the volume of vegetation that grows in this country between mid May and then end of June! The cattle of course love it, fresh grass everyday makes them happy campers.

Market Schedule Set

We are on track to be at market starting **Saturday July 26th** at the new **Main Street Farmers Market** which is located at located at St Paul University at 223 Main Street in Ottawa South. We will also continue to sell Sundays at the **Ottawa Farmers Market at Lansdowne** starting **Sunday July 27th**. The reason for 2 markets this year is that due to the overwhelming reponse to our beef in 2007 we have doubled production and so have doubled sales time.



Ashton Glen Farm Philosophy

As we grow we remain steadfast to our commitment to produce great tasting food which is good for you and good for the planet. That means managing our farm according to sustainable organic practices while ensuring that our animals have a

healthy and happy life here. We work with local businesses to transport and process our meat and we hang the beef for 21 days to ensure maximum flavour and tenderness. This "craft" philosophy doesn't result in the yields that conventional farming can produce, actually about 1/3 less, but it does produce a product which we are proud to sell. Our reward comes when customers tell us "that is the best beef we have ever eaten".

Haying 101



Make hay while the sun shines is a popular expression which is at the top of our minds right now. I thought you might be interested in the basics of making hay. Good hay is made up of vigorous grasses (timothy, rye, canary) and legumes (clovers, alfalfa, vetch) and is ideally harvested just as the flowers are formed but before actually blooming. This is when the plant's proteins, sugars and starches are at their maximum. We

cut it on day 1 using a 1960's haybine mower which has a 9ft blade moving back and forth about 10 times per second, driven by our 50 horse Kubota tractor. The haybine creates windrows 6ft wide leaving 1.5 feet between rows so that you don't have to drive over the cut hay. While cutting "the birds have a field day", another expression you may have heard. The swallows especially like the bugs that swarm up from the



fallen grasses. The hay is dried by the sun and breeze until day 3. After the dew is off on the 3rd day the windrows are raked. This turns over the hay on the bottom so that it all gets dried as well as reducing the windrows to 3 feet for the baler. That afternoon baling starts. This takes the now cured hay which should have a moisture level of 20% and rolls it into round bales that weigh about 600 lbs each that can be stacked and stored in the barn for winter feed. During this 3 day window you

cannot have any rain. If you do they hay will rot and mold and can only be chopped for mulch and left in the field. The first 3 day window this year did not occur until July 3. The grasses were a bit past maximum protein by that time, but rained on hay has no food value, having been all eaten by mold, so that trade off is easy for a farmer to decide. "Make hay while the sun shines"



Agricultural Fairs



Country fairs are a wonderful old tradition, which if you have time, are worth visiting. Many years ago they were the highlight of the social year. They are a place where rural folk get together to have fun, socialize and show off their year's

agriculture or home craft work. Most of the Ottawa Valley Fairs are well over one hundred years old. We go to the Almonte (July 18-20) and Perth (Aug 29-Sep 1)



fairs which are 150 and 163 years old respectively. I will let you in on a little secret though, our favourite is the Middleville Fair. It is one day only (Sep 13) and has no midway or carnival. It has sheep, poultry, cattle, quilting, flowers and vegetables, and craft competitions together with a homemade lunch and supper complete with some of the best pies and pickles you will ever eat. For a complete fair list see www.ontariofairs.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the Market this summer both our old customers and new. Once again, this year you can find us on either Saturday at the Mainstreet Farmer's Market on the grounds of Saint Paul University at 223 Main Street starting on July 26th, or Sundays at the Ottawa Farmer's Market at Lansdowne starting July 27th.

Dave and Diane Smith

Jamie and Danielle

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