



Ashton Glen Farm

Organic Grassfed Angus

Natural Yorkshire Pork

www.ashtonglenfarm.ca

[Summer 2010 Newsletter](#)

The 2010 farmers market season for us will start **Saturday July 24** at the **Main Street Farmers Market** on the grounds of St Paul University on Main Street. We will have individual cuts of beef for sale as usual, with pork coming later in August.

Many ask us why we start so late in the season. As you know, our beef is grassfed. The attributes which make **grassfed beef** what it is are at peak quality after the cattle have been on fresh green grass for a good 2 months.

Then, after 3 weeks of aging we come to the 4th week of July. Quality remains optimal through October. Seasonal beef! It's slow food and that's the way we like it.



[Fences At Ashton Glen](#)



I thought I would share with you a little bit about fencing. In a livestock operation, fencing is a critical component. The principle purpose of a fence is to keep our animals on our property. This has many obvious benefits. We only have to look so far to find our livestock, our neighbours don't have cattle eating their garden or crops, and there is much less chance of a cow/car accident. You

have probably heard the expression "good fences make good neighbours", and it is true. In rural areas the Ontario Line Fence Act provides for mediation services when two neighbours cannot agree on who should pay for the building

or maintenance of a (boundary) line fence. Beckwith Township, where we live, has fence-viewers who arrange a viewing to arbitrate between 2 neighbours who cannot agree on fencing. Previous to that the right hand rule applied, ie two adjacent land owners met at the middle of their boundary and faced each other. Each farmer then built and maintained the fence on their right. These days in urban municipalities city councils have gotten out of fence arbitration and have a by law referring fence disputes to civil courts.

Our farm, which dates to 1818, has employed many variants of cedar fencing to contain livestock and mark boundaries. At the time, cedar was plentiful, regrew at rate which matched the life of the fence, and was easy to work with being light, and naturally resistant to rot. We have fence sections that are easily 100 years old, and some sections of the barns have been standing over 160 years and are still sound.

The most prolific fence we use is called the cedar stack fence. This is a four log fence, with the largest log, the bunk log, at the bottom, and each successive log a little smaller. Also, we alternate the thick and thin ends up the stack so that the height is more even across the top. Each course of logs is separated by a cross piece. The cross pieces are notched into the logs an inch or so to prevent rolling. Gravity is employed to create vertical stability and lastly 2 pickets are wired across the end of each section to provide lateral stability. The traditional length of each section is a rod (16.5 feet)



Newer fences on this property are patent fences. A popular fence, it can be seen on many properties in Lanark County. This fence is built above ground with no post holes required and still has excellent lateral and vertical stability. There are many variations of patents, but the idea of the patentee was that they would collect a fee from you for using the design. The patent has long since expired.

We have several other types of fences, one of the more interesting being the snake fence. It is generally built along a woodlot and literally snakes its way between the trees to separate pasture from forest, while maximizing the pasture land. The fence uses living trees to provide stability.



Other News



This is a busy time of year at the farm. In addition to starting market, it is haying time and calving season. Both are going well this year. We are also expanding our pig operation somewhat and have built a second pig pasture with a new summer use pig house.

The famous story of the 3 little pigs did not recommend straw construction, but we felt that hay would make an excellent building material. So far so good, and the pigs like it. The cows will eat the hay this winter!



We look forward to seeing you at the Main Street Market starting July 24 2010. Have a Great Summer....Dave and Diane Smith