

Winters Grass Farm
6823 Mallory Rd.
Holland Patent, NY 13354
315-269-9237

Howdy Folks,

Spring 2008

As we move into the spring of a new year it is exciting to see how the farm has grown compared to this same time last year, thanks to your support! It is encouraging to see the response to what we are doing as it ensures us that we are doing the right thing and offering something that all of you see as important also.

Problems in the Food Supply - In this year's newsletter, I want to address why we are doing what we are doing and why it is important. After all, if there is nothing wrong with the current food system, why should we change it? But I think we can all see that there are problems with the way food is being produced in America, and the problems seem to be surfacing more and more. The recent beef recall from a California slaughterhouse, which was the largest in history, is just another example of this.

One of the problems is that we have handed the responsibility of ensuring that our food is produced in a safe and healthy manner over to the Federal Government! Notice where the beef from this slaughterhouse was going ... to fast food restaurants, and ironically, government schools. Not only that, but the USDA did not take action to enforce its own laws, which this slaughterhouse has been breaking for some time, until it was forced to do so after video footage surfaced from an undercover investigation conducted by the Humane Society of America. Once the public became aware of how these animals were being horrifically treated, and that they were feeding school children meat from animals that couldn't even walk on their own, only then did the USDA step in and order a recall.

This is only one example of how the USDA has fallen short in protecting us from corporations that are more interested in money than in making sure that the food you and I eat is both safe and healthy.

Factory Farming Creates Artificial Food - Farming has been turned into another industry where everything is mass produced. The USDA has been a strong proponent of the "get big or get out" mentality. No consideration has been given to the fact that we are not dealing with raw materials but rather living things. This degradation of agriculture began with the abasement of the soil via the use of toxic chemicals and pesticides. Does it even make sense that we would use poisons to grow what should be healthy, nutritious food?

To quote Sir Albert Howard from *An Agricultural Testament*, "*Artificial manures (chemical fertilizers) inevitably lead to artificial nutrition, artificial food, artificial animals, and finally, to artificial men and women.*" Farming is not just another industry where our products can be mass produced. It requires working with the weather, the soil, and other living things that can only be manipulated or exploited to our own harm.

Artificial Food Creates Rampant Health Issues - As the health of the soil has been destroyed, so has the health of the people for whom it provides, thus we have the rise of the pharmaceutical industry. A hundred years ago people didn't survive on pills and medications, and they didn't have the health problems that we as a nation have today. I am suggesting that it is possible to restore our health, but it requires that we return to eating the food that is produced around us from farmers who are dedicated to caring for and nurturing the soil, land, and animals that provide us with our food.

Know Your Producer / Buy Local! - This brings me to another point. Most of our food is imported. It is nearly impossible to know how our food is produced and processed when it is grown a thousand miles away and travels more miles than you do.

New York is a big state with over 30 million acres of land. We are more than capable of producing all of our own food, yet one cannot but help noticing all the farms lying idle, or all the old dairy barns on the verge of collapsing. It seems that there are more of these than there are of actual operating farms. There are literally thousands if not millions of acres in this state alone that are lying idle that could be put to use producing all the food we need. (Politicians are always talking about improving the economy, but wouldn't it be wonderful if they eliminated the taxes and removed the regulations that make it too hard if not impossible for small farms to exist? New York could again have a wonderfully vibrant agricultural based economy!)

The majority of our beef is imported from out west when we have more than enough pasture land to produce our own. We import apples and other fruit from Washington and California when there are many ideal locations for producing such things locally. Even our vegetables are being imported, sometimes even from Mexico or China. This has become even more prevalent among supposedly organic products.

So what is the answer? Get to know where your food comes from. Get to know the person that produces your food. Find someone who is doing their best to grow food that is good for you, not trying to see how much they can get away with.

At this point, we know most of the people we sell to. We would never consider for a moment doing something that might end up hurting you or one of your loved ones. That is why we encourage folks to take the time to come and see for themselves what we are doing. In essence, you are our inspectors. Because of that we take our job seriously to make sure that the food we produce is of the highest nutritional quality and will not harm you in any way. We don't cut corners that affect the quality of the product just so we can save a nickel.

The point is that we can't hand over the job of making sure that our food is produced safely to the government, the FDA, or even another person. If we do so, we will end up dealing with problems such as this beef recall. No one can do the job as well as you can.

Also, we need more farmers. Recently I was talking to a friend who runs a vegetable CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), and she mentioned how they can't keep up with demand. They had to turn down a lot of orders. Polyface Farms, one of the biggest pasture based farms on the east coast, can't keep up with the demand for their products.

The answer isn't to get bigger. That's what Walmart does. We would rather see numerous small farms than just a few big farms. Maybe you know someone who is interested in farming. Encourage that person to try it. Support him. Even growing your own garden is a step in the right direction.

It is going to take both farmers and consumers working together to make this possible. We love what we do, but without your support, this wouldn't be possible. So let's work together to ensure that our families can eat healthy! Let's work at restoring agriculture to the countryside, either by doing it, or by supporting it!

To receive an order form or if you have other questions or comments, please email or call.

Sincerely,

Jordan Winters

Jordan@WintersGrassFarm.com
315.269.9237