

# Fountain Prairie

Inn & Farms



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## What's New

### Here's the Beef

By Terese Allen

The importance of knowing where your food comes from has never been more apparent than since the discovery of mad cow disease in the United States. But if you've been reading the onslaught of news about the feeding and processing of cattle in our nation, you know how complicated it is to determine the purity of your beef. What should a beef-eater do?

I say buy local, from family farmers who market directly to consumers. These are the small guys, the ones who go out on a limb to bring you labor-intensive, naturally raised animals and are available to answer all your questions about the who, what, when, where, how and why of the beef you buy from them.



You'll have no trouble finding local, sustainable grown beef in southern Wisconsin. Start at the Dane County Winter Farmer's Market (Saturdays 8 a.m. at the Madison Senior Center, 330 W. Mifflin St). Here, the folks from Fountain Prairie Inn and Farms feature grass-fed Highland cattle, a long-haired Scottish breed that takes to Wisconsin winters like, well, a duck to water. The animals are chemicals-, antibiotic- and steroid-free. They feed on prairie grasses and are finished on homegrown corn.

Fountain Prairie beef is dry-aged to enhance flavor and increase tenderness, and owners John and Dorothy Priske offer a full range of cuts. I recently braised one of their excellent chuck roasts and am looking forward to using

their round steak in stir-fries and stews.

Mineral Point's Jerry Marr, whose cattle are Angus and Angus cross-bred also sells an array of cuts at the local market and for bulk-buyers, he takes orders for quarter and half-animals. Marr uses no growth hormones, no chemical weed control and no animal byproducts.

Marr's appreciation is echoed by other farmers who depend on local processors. Diane and Matthew Sharp of Highland Hearth Farm in Reedsburg and Rebecca and Jim Hoodmen of Wonewoc's Northwood Farm work with plants that process one animal at a time. While the Sharps and Goodmans are not at the winter market, they like many other area farmers, sell directly to buyers in the Madison area year-round and welcome visitors who want to learn more.

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