







Spring Joy with Cattle Grazing

Two decades ago, my family began eating local grass-fed beef from Ridge Shinn and Pam and Ray Robinson. We loved the taste and appreciated that the animals were raised well.

In 2010 we purchased a skittish Scottish Highland steer named Gizmo from a farm in Oakham. Following the seller's advice, we overwintered Gizmo and let him graze in our pastures until slaughter. Valley View Farm in Hubbardston did an excellent job of processing. All the meat cuts were delicious.



Gizmo's Final Grazing Day October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Going forward we decided to raise our own beef to have a continuous freezer supply. Feedlot beef bargains no longer had any appeal despite the low cost. We wanted an alternative to feedlot beef which is inferior in taste and unhealthy for our health and environment.

My family learned by trial and error that herd management is very important. Raising a single steer is a challenge since cattle thrive as social creatures. We increased our herd size to two and found out with dismay and angst that it is often very stressful on the lone survivor at slaughter time. One lone steer bellowed constantly and lost a couple hundred pounds in weight. This unhappy steer yielded poor quality meat in terms of being tough and too lean.





Arrival of Normandy Bull Calves from Hancock Farm in Barre July 23, 2017



Daily Feeding with Milk Replacer August 31, 2017

My family is not troubled by eating friendly animals. We have named our cattle food names over the years that included MacMuffin, Oreo, and Pringles. We take pride in our excellent care until slaughter. Stan jokes he is producing Wagyu beef when he affectionately



massages them. We accept that there is a time to raise, a time to harvest as there is a time for everything under the sun.



Our Farm Animals as Pets and Food



Simon with his One-Year-Old Son Rowan and Norman the Steer



We learned that most of our cattle were compatible with grazing with our sheep flock with the exception lambing season.



Gentle Giants with the Sheep Flock



Compatible Grazing Ruminants September 23, 2024, During a Severe Drought





Young Border Collie Levi Herding Sheep and Cattle October 8, 2024

Some of our cattle become protective and nurturing with the lambs. However, with more than 200-fold weight difference, co-housing during lambing season is risky.



Normandy Steer Curiosity with Newborn Scottish Blackface Lamb



Our solution for having happier cattle was to increase the herd size and transport two together to the slaughterhouse. Most of our calves began to be born on our farm saving us the trouble with the expense and time with daily formula mixing and bottle feeding.



New Calf April 11, 2022, Bringing Joy



Always Grateful for Successful Calving, March 15, 2025



We bought a larger freezer and began to share our large beef inventory with friends, neighbors, family, and colleagues. Our last steer yielded 95 lbs of beef bones. This winter I begged people to take bags of beef bones along with my cooking suggestions.

*Our butchers at New England Meat Packing Company in Stafford Springs, CT package many bones together in large bags. These tend to freeze together. To work with these large volumes, I drop the bag outside to break apart the bone masses. I like to work with about three pounds of bones at one time. I do not thaw the bones before immersing them completely with salt water and rinsing at least twice over a span of at least two hours. My salted water recipe is about 2 T salt per gallon. Rinse water at the end should appear clean instead of bloody. Pour off salt water before cooking begins.*

*Brown bones on all sides on high heat in a Dutch oven. Cover bones with water and add 1/3 cup white, wine, or cider vinegar. Simmer for about three hours.*

*Take the bones out of the broth and let cool. Remove the meat and marrow and add back to broth. Some beef bones are fatty leading to a richer broth. Feel free to skim off the fat. Discard the bones and cartilage. Bone broth is nutritive, mineral rich, and helpful for immune system support. I like the flavor and use the broth as a basis for many stews and soups.*

Beef broth is great for borscht stew. My Ukrainian high school exchange student Andriy Babyn shared his passion and joy with making borscht in my kitchen in 2007. Sadly, when I prepare borscht now, I am reminded of the terrible Ukraine war. Andriy's mother let me know that her last contact with her son was in Kiev in February 2022. She hopes to be reunited with Andriy when more POWs are released from Russian prisons.

### *Borscht with Beef Broth*

*Add ingredients to half a gallon of beef broth in the following order:*

*4 cups potatoes, peeled and cubed*

*1 medium onion chopped*

*1 pound beets peeled and cubed*

*½ t black pepper*



*1 bay leaf*

*2 T cumin*

*2 T dill weed, fresh is best*

*1 t hot pepper flakes*

*1 t ground black pepper*

*½ t celery seed*

*Simmer covered about an hour until potatoes are tender.*

*Add 1 cup chopped leeks*

*2 cups carrot, grated*

*Add about 2 cups of water and simmer about 10 minutes.*

*Serve in bowls with 2 T yogurt and fresh dill weed.*



**Borscht with Beef Broth**

My husband and sons like raising cattle and so we have a herd size that that enables us to harvest two or three annually without causing social distress. We have adequate pasture to grass feed for most of the year.





Herd Grazing on Pasture



Beautiful Bucolic Pasture with Border Collie Lenna November 2, 2024

As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, we have on pasture one young bull, three steers, five heifers, and two calves. We anticipate that two heifers will give birth soon. Gladys will become a grandmother to a second calf.





Herd June 1st, 2025, with Stan and Border Collie Levi



Gladys Focused on Levi

The herd matriarch is a Scottish Highland named Gladys. Gladys is friendly despite her intimidating bulk and huge horns. She has given birth to a healthy calf annually for the past five years.





Gladys Leading Herd to Greener Pastures



Gladys with her Young Heifer Calf born May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The calf's markings show that her father was a Hereford bull in our freezer. For handler safety, our young bulls are processed prior to calf births. Bullburger is delicious!





Photogenic Gladys



Scottish Highland Hereford Cross Will Calve in Summer 2025





Satisfying and Calming Seeing Cattle Munching Greens



Lenna Waiting for Herding Commands May 8, 2022



Most recent steer processed by New England Meat Packing in Stafford Springs, CT yielded 118 pounds of ground beef. As a result, I have prepared meatballs for many social events.

### ***Meat Ball Recipe***

*The basic recipe begins with a one-pound package of ground meat mixed together with one beaten egg.*

*Variations:*

*Include any or all the following*

*1 medium chopped onion*

*½ cup fresh mint leaves*

*½ cup fresh parsley*

*½ cup fresh cilantro*

*1 T fresh lovage*

*2 T fresh marjoram*

*¼ cup grated parmesan*

*½ t black pepper*

*1 t hot pepper flakes*

*1 t minced garlic*

*I make about 24 meatballs with my hands and place them on a baking tray. I use a light broil setting to brown the top of the meatballs and then proceed with baking at 375F until completely cooked, about 15 minutes. There should be no pink interior.*

I find joy in setting the meatballs with herbs, vegetables, and edible flowers from my gardens.



Meatball Platter with Fresh Mint, Dill, and Bronze Fennel for my Father's 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party.





Spring Equinox Celebration with a Meatball Platter with Garlic Scapes and Flowering Sage



Summer Presentation with Nasturtium Flowers and Leaves



In summary, I hope you have inspired you to seek joy in raising and cooking your own beef. If you do not have pasture access or if taking care of cattle is too much work and responsibility, please purchase locally grown pastured beef. Feedlot beef should go on your forbidden food list. We are fortunate to have many wonderful farms in Hardwick that sell high-quality grass-fed beef as a variety of cuts and packages.

