



Ulla Kjarval is a NYC-based photographer, food blogger and grass-fed farming advocate. Her family operates Spring Lake Farm in Meredith. Ulla's blog is titled Goldilocks Finds Manhattan. She is looking for local farms to feature in this column. If you have a favorite farm or want to have your farm featured, please contact her at ullabear@yahoo.com.

Fox Falls Farm



I stumbled upon Fox Falls Farm's brochure for its meat CSA and was immediately intrigued. A CSA, which stands for Community Supported Agriculture, is a business model where consumers pay in advance for products directly from farmers. Fox Falls Farm offers grass-fed beef, lamb and pastured pork for \$500 on a 25-week subscription, which works out to \$20 a week for two shares of meat.

There are advantages for both consumer and farmer with a CSA; the consumer knows that he has a source of safe local food. The farmer, in turn, benefits by knowing that each animal is accounted for, which makes marketing and distribution less of an effort. The system works well for Ed Lentz Jr. and his wife, Yuriko. Along with their two daughters, Emmy and Sera, they raise heritage Dexter cows, Romney and Katandin sheep, and Yorkshire pigs on a farm in New Lisbon.

Ed met Yuriko in Japan while working as a hardware engineer for a digital camera company. After the economic downturn, they decided to move to upstate New York and bought a farm adjacent to his parents, Ed and Vicky Lentz, who also farm. Yuriko is a talented web and graphic designer who created Fox Falls Farm's brochure, logo and new website. The couple also have a blog that chronicles farm life at: <http://foxfalls-farm.wordpress.com>

Almost every part of the farm is used: A neighbor is tapping the maple trees, there are two beehives and Ed is growing crops such as wheat, spelt and canola while also taking care of a neighbor's cattle. Self-sufficiency is part of Ed's philosophy and one of the reasons he ended up farming. He likes to grow what he needs on the farm so that he can control input costs.

"This winter we have wheat, spelt and rye. Over the summer, we did canola, oats, buckwheat, barley and wheat. I can't compete with Midwestern farmers on price, but I can use the

grains here on the farm and sell directly." Ed even converts the canola seeds into truck fuel and hopes to have all his machinery running on farm-grown fuel.

Fox Falls Farm's interest in community is one of the reasons the Lentzes are committed to providing better meat at an affordable price. "We charge a premium over the supermarket, but we still want to be affordable to our neighbors," Ed explained.

He noted that he finds consumers for his meat when he least expects it, such as on a recent visit to the doctor. "People are looking for local meats, better meats, but they do not really know how to go about it," he said. His hope is to serve these consumers who would otherwise go to the supermarket.

The Lentzes' Dexter cows are small, but Ed explained that most cattle

used to be much smaller than they are today. In fact, a neighboring barn, one of the oldest in the county, has stalls that are too small to house a modern Holstein. Many grass-fed beef producers are starting to breed their animals with a smaller frame, but the Dexter, a rare breed from Ireland, has always retained its naturally diminutive size. The breed is dual purpose, so Ed and his family also make cheese with the milk. Ed noted that the milk was extremely creamy and much different from the "watery milk" at the supermarket.

CSA customers pick up their meat at the farm, and the Lentzes provide instructions on how best to cook grass-fed meats. One benefit of a CSA is that it includes different types of meats, and this recipe incorporates both bacon and grass-fed beef. I like to braise beef in the winter, and this recipe, where the grass-fed beef is braised in wine, is elegant enough for a dinner party. In fact, when I serve it I always get requests for the recipe. I like this with mashed potatoes or mashed, roasted squash. **UL**

Grass-fed Beef Braised in Red Wine

Ingredients:

- * 6 slices of bacon (about 6 ounces)
- * 1 1/2 pounds beef for stew
- * 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- * 2 onions, quartered and separated
- * 2 1/2 cups dry red wine
(I use a French-style red from the Finger Lakes called *Cuvee Rouge*, from the *Chateau Lafayette Reneau* winery)
- * Lots of salt and pepper

Preparation:

- 1) In a heavy pot, place slices of bacon; cook until crisp but not hard.
- 2) Remove bacon and set aside.
- 3) Season beef liberally with salt and pepper, then add to bacon fat and brown. Add onions and garlic.
- 4) Slice cooked bacon and add to pot.
- 5) Add wine.
- 6) Cover and cook for 2 hours on low heat. I like the wine to reduce, so I sometimes take the lid off 10 minutes before serving.
- 7) Serve with mashed potatoes or squash.

