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Minnesota Ranch Produces Wagyu Beef

Southern Minnesota beef supplier Fellers Ranch offers customers high-quality beef from a breed that's hard to find in the United States - Wagyu cattle.

Fellers Ranch began in early 2021 when five friends (the "fellers") saw an opportunity to combine their skill sets and backgrounds to start a Wagyu beef business.

"My partners and I knew we wanted to start a top-quality, farm-to-table beef business," says Feller's partner Don Savelkoul. "We were confident that people in this area would be interested in purchasing healthy, locally raised, high-quality beef if given the opportunity."

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Explains Savelkoul, "By coincidence, a relatively large herd of Wagyu was being raised by one of our friends (now a partner) for a rancher out of Wyoming. With the Wagyu being raised down the road, we were able to learn more about this special breed. More importantly, we were able to taste Wagyu for the first time ourselves - and it was excellent, by far the best steaks we'd ever had."

It happened that this rancher was approaching retirement and looking for a buyer for his cattle. The partners decided to step up and start with that herd

Savelkoul believes Wagyu beef has some key selling points compared to conventional livestock options.

"Wagyu beef is much more flavorful and tender than conventional feedlot beef, and it

is far healthier. A steak knife is seldom used with Wagyu, as it is easily cut by a fork. The health benefits are based on the higher percentage of good cholesterol compared to other beef."

This specialty breed requires an extra level of care. While feedlot cattle take about 15 mos. to get to slaughter weight, Wagyu typically take 30 mos. or longer. "That's because they eat a more balanced diet," says Savelkoul. "They're fed much more hay and other fiber, while feedlot cattle receive much more grain. The result is extreme marbling, which creates fat within the meat itself, rather than on the outside of the meat."

Today, Fellers Ranch prides itself on handling as much of its beef production onsite as possible.

"Most ranches are not involved with the processing, marketing, sales, delivery, and distribution of meat," says Savelkoul. "We grow the hay, oats, and corn that feeds our cattle; we raise the cattle; we butcher the cattle, and we sell and deliver the meat. We can trace every cut of meat back to the calf that it came from."

Those living in or around Minnesota can sample Fellers Ranch beef throughout the region's restaurants or purchase it for cooking at home through the retailers specified on the company website. It's also possible to order online for overnight delivery across the country.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Fellers Ranch, 100 William Ave., Conger, Minn. 56020 (ph 507-265-3340; info@fellersranch.com; www.fellersranch.com).



Virginia Hennessey and her husband restored an old granary for use as a party and wine tasting venue on their Wisconsin farm. This tasting room was once a grain bin.

Old Granary Converted Into On-Farm Destination

Though it took them 3 years, hundreds of hours, and help from family, friends and neighbors, Joe and Virginia Hennessey finally completed the renovation of their 100-year-old farm granary, turning it into a spacious and rustic venue for a variety of events on their Wisconsin farm.

"When we told people our plans for the building, they thought we were crazy," Virginia recalls. "The roof was full of holes, the doors didn't work, the wood bins smelled like moldy grain, and the floor was so uneven it was difficult to walk on."

"The basic structure was solid, so we spent the better part of a year just cleaning it out, taking bins apart, and making plans for how it might look as a nice party venue," Virginia says. They fixed the foundation, removing the walls between two bins to create a main gathering room on one side of the building and turning two bins on the opposite side into separate sitting rooms. Openings were cut in the wood walls with the lumber used to make sliding doors that now ride on barn door hardware. Windows were added to provide natural light into each room that's decorated with rustic furniture and unique wall artwork.

"The building was comfortable for 30 or 40 people, and we expanded it by adding a pergola and seating area outside the entrance," Virginia says. "It's a comfortable venue for class reunions, graduations, family reunions, and other gatherings."

Visitors to the farm can also step into another piece of history nearby. The 120-year-old summer kitchen across the driveway from the granary houses Virginia's bakery, where she crafts more than 25 flavors of bread, brownies, and cinnamon and caramel rolls that she sells on the farm. The preparation room is updated with foodservice quality stainless fixtures, but the baking room still has the sturdy and elegant high wood beamed ceiling that the original settlers crafted without the use of power tools. "It was built to last an eternity, and we're proud to keep it in original condition," Virginia says.

Baking something every few days for 9 mos. of the year and holding classes for people who want to learn the art of breadmaking keeps Virginia busy. Still, over the years she and Joe added new features to their farm. They moved three old wire ear corn cribs to their yard and turned them into gazebo seating areas. A new building adjacent to the granary houses a walk-in freezer that holds frozen baked goods and ice cream. Local wines are also available in Virginia's country store.

"We truly enjoy it, but after all these years it's time to slow down."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Virginia Hennessey, 11658 Hwy 70, Grantsburg, Wis. 54840.

Dairy Sells Skin Care Products

Austin Allred is putting colostrum from his Royal Dairy to good use by making a skin care product with it. The first milk produced by a cow after giving birth is loaded with antibodies and nutrients, but a cow produces much more than a new calf needs. The innovative dairyman got the idea of putting the extra to work for humans when a family member had skin problems.

"Austin had a niece with eczema, and he suggested his sister give her milk baths," says Nurst CEO and part owner Jennifer Davis. "He began researching the benefits of milk and learned what colostrum could do for the skin. He had extra and decided to find a use for it."

Aldred has built a reputation for his 10,000-head Royal Dairy as being innovative and entrepreneurial. He

developed a biofilter system that uses wood chips and vermiculture to remove nutrients from dairy wastewater. The system reduces the number of acres needed to irrigate with the filtered water and produces valuable worm castings.

To develop Nurst Rapid Repair Cream, Allred and his wife worked with a lab on the formulation. The skin cream can be used anywhere on the body and is safe for children and adults. The moisturizer is marketed as a favorite for dry acne-prone or aging skin and is marketed completely through social media.

"It's pretty incredible to see the support we've had from the dairy industry on social media," says Davis. "There are a lot of dairy women very active on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook telling their farms' stories to consumers."

The support was enough that the company rapidly sold out its first batch of Nurst Rapid Repair Cream. It doesn't hurt that customers are super satisfied and endorse the product with friends and family.

"We offer 100 percent satisfaction, and we've never had a refund request," says Davis. "Word of mouth has given us lots of consistent clients."

Other products are following too. "We're formulating a toner and a face cream that should be available by November," says Davis.

Davis encourages interested FARM SHOW readers to follow the company on social media to learn about product availability. Nurst Rapid Repair Cream is priced at \$37.50 for a 3.4 oz. container.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nurst, 11792 Rd. 12.5 SW, Royal City, Wash. 99357 (www.nurst.com; www.theroyaldairy.com).



Nurst products use colostrum for its antibodies and nutrients.