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# Pilot Project For Carcass Removal A Success

“Safe Cycle”, a pilot project undertaken by the Narragansett Bay Coyote Study (NBCS), and funded by a Conservation Innovation grant by the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Services, was developed to test the feasibility of a novel way to dispose of animal carcasses in an environmentally responsible manner. The “Safe Cycle” unit is an accelerated composter that creates a pathogen-free natural fertilizer that can be used within 18 hours.

The Safe Cycle project utilizes chemical digestion of dead livestock. This method has the advantages of destruction of pathogens (including prions) and removing carcasses from the environment (with the benefit of reduction of environmental contamination and reduction in attracting scavengers such as coyotes). The end product of the digestion is a substance that can be applied to a field as

a soil amendment-like fertilizer. Carcass removal, potentially through the “Safe Cycle” program, is an important part of the Coyote Best Management Practices to counteract the “more food more puppies” effect. It also reduces or reverses the “coyotes that get a taste for dead sheep or calves start preying on live sheep or calves” effect and reduces pathogens. This pilot study has provided a free service to participants.

The goal of the Safe Cycle Pilot was to demonstrate the need for and effectiveness of the Safe Cycle unit for carcass recycling. Originally the project was planned to go 3 months on only Aquidneck Island and Jamestown. Instead - to get an idea of statewide needs - the team expanded the project to all RI - which meant an early end date if there was a large demand. The demand was high: the team collected and processed

23 deer, 3 cows, 2 calves, 1 sheep and 2 lambs - NBCS views this as 6000 lbs of food that didn't fuel the RI coyote puppy production mill. The culmination of the project was a demonstration of the finished cycle and fertilizer output to representatives from DEM (including Larry Mooradjian, Associate Director, Ken Ayers, Director of the Division of Agriculture, Scott Marshall, State Veterinarian) and NRCS (Eric Scherer, State Resource Conservationist). A “Brainstorming” session on possible ways of funding the continuation of the program statewide will occur on March 17 at DEM Division of Agriculture. If you are interested in making this program a reality you might send an email or letter of encouragement to Ken Ayers ([ken.ayers@DEM.RI.GOV](mailto:ken.ayers@DEM.RI.GOV), Chief of Division of Agriculture, DEM, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908) this upcoming week.

P.O. Box 640, N. Scituate, RI 02857



Remember to renew your membership by March 31st.



# NEWS

Winter 2010-2011

Volume 4 Issue 2

## Join us for RIRLA's 2011 Annual Meeting

**T**his year's Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association will be held on Monday, March 28, 2011, at the West Greenwich Elks Lodge, 42 Nooseneck Road, Rt.3, West Greenwich, RI. This meeting is open to all members and anyone interested in livestock farming in Rhode Island.

Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. this year, with the opportunity to network with other farmers and browse the information tables of agricultural vendors such as TJ Hay and Grain, contractors like Kahn Tractor and service providers including the Farm Bureau, NRCS, FSA, Farm Family Insurance and many more. A raffle will be held for the items the vendors are donating, and winners will be announced at the end of the

meeting. There will be light dinner fare available, beginning at 5:30: sandwiches, drinks and desserts, free of charge and sponsored by John T. Howard and Farm Family Insurance.

The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. Attendees will be able to learn more about the Association and the benefits of membership; view the Association's evolving website; get valuable information on services, programs and organizations that are available to assist farmers with marketing, business and animal husbandry; find out how to obtain permits to sell your meat; hear about upcoming educational and networking events; as well as the opportunity to tell RIRLA what you would like to see the Association offer to farmers in 2011 and beyond, and last but not least:

### GET INVOLVED!

We encourage all current members to attend, and ask them to invite all others they know who may be interested in joining RIRLA. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about all the benefits Association has to offer its members.

### The agenda:

1. Officers' reports
2. Current events report from DEM
3. Resources available to RI farmers for business, marketing and animal husbandry
4. Review of 2010 and preview of 2011 including processing, pasture walks, cut workshops and more
5. Member forum
6. Election of officers
7. Meeting adjourned

## Holdsworth Farm/NRCS PastureWalk

**W**orking with NRCS" was the subject of the September 16, 2010 RIRLA pasture walk at Holdsworth Farm in Foster. Jane Christopher and Chris Ulrich have been working with NRCS EQIP grants for three years, implementing practices involving forest management, pasture improvement, livestock fencing, enhancing an existing roadway, and more. The focus of the pasture walk was to show results of these practices, through before and after photos and video, and walking through portions of the farm property.

Rhode Island NRCS agents Garrett Timmons and Eric Boettger were on hand to answer questions, explain the practices, and speak to the benefits of applying for both EQIP and WHIP grants. Kevin Ogles, Grazing Lands Specialist, and

Steve Woodruff, agronomist, from the USDA-NRCS-East National Technology Support Center from Greensboro, NC, were also in attendance, and offered their expertise at answering pasture and grazing questions. Grazing sticks were given out to the dozen attendees, and positive feedback was high.

The RI Raised Livestock Association will be offering more of these very informative workshops during 2011. Stay tuned for more information on this and other educational events.



# Johne's Disease – What You Need To Know

## Part 1

Article submitted by Scott Marshall, RI State Veterinarian

**W**hile research shows that only eight out of 100 U.S. beef herds may be infected with *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP), the organism that causes Johne's disease, Dr. Elizabeth Parker with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association stated at an October 2009 Johne's Disease Working Group meeting that "If you ignore any disease—including Johne's disease, it will become a threat."

least the education and management levels. "Johne's disease is an easy disease to buy as animals that show no clinical signs of Johne's disease can still be infected with MAP. Producers should always ask questions about a beef herd's Johne's disease status and only purchase from low-risk herds. I need to underscore the fact that no herd—beef or dairy—can say it is 'Johne's free.' Herds that have been tested and have no positive animals can only say that they are low-risk herds."



A prevalence study conducted in the Georgia beef industry found that 4% of Georgia beef cattle test positive for Johne's disease—and this 4% infection rate is estimated to cost to the Georgia beef industry \$2.45 million to \$4.9 million each year. If 8% of U.S. beef herds are infected with Johne's disease—as research indicates and the cost of the disease reflects the Georgia figures, then the cost of Johne's disease within the beef industry could reach \$100 million and up. "That's good reason for beef producers to be aware of Johne's disease and take proactive steps to keep the disease from entering their herd," states Dr. Elisabeth Patton, chair of the National Johne's Disease Committee of the U.S. Animal Health Association.

"At a minimum, beef producers should participate in the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program on at

*MAP, the bacteria that causes Johne's disease, doesn't take a break even in winter. Educate yourself about Johne's disease. Email [info@johnesdisease.org](mailto:info@johnesdisease.org) today and request your free copy of "Johne's Disease Q&A for Bovine Producers."*

### There are three stages of Johne's disease in cattle:

**STAGE I:** Cattle are infected but showing no clinical signs and not shedding MAP. Typically this stage occurs in calves, heifers, and young stock less than two years of age and many adult animals exposed to small doses of the disease-causing organism. This stage progresses slowly over many months or years to Stage II.

**STAGE II:** Cattle are infected, shedding MAP but do not show clinical signs of the disease. Typically this stage occurs in

older heifers or adults. These animals pose a major, but often hidden, threat for infection of other animals through contamination of the environment.

**STAGE III:** Cattle are shedding MAP and showing clinical signs. The onset of Stage III is often associated with a period of stress, such as recent calving. Cattle at this stage have intermittent, watery manure. Animals lose weight and gradually drop in milk production but continue to have a good appetite. Some animals appear to recover but often relapse in the next stress period. Most of these animals are shedding billions of MAP organisms that can infect herd mates and calves.

MAP, the bacteria that causes Johne's disease, doesn't take a break even in winter. Educate yourself about Johne's disease. Email [info@johnesdisease.org](mailto:info@johnesdisease.org) today and request your free copy of "Johne's Disease Q&A for Bovine Producers."

With a strong interest among many producers and veterinarians to have a more effective vaccine to help protect against Johne's disease, USDA/APHIS/VS is funding a vaccine project overseen by the Johne's Disease Integrated Program. The first phase of the project was an in vitro screening of all submitted candidates in laboratories at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Minnesota. Phase 2, which has begun, is to evaluate the Top 10 candidates using a mouse model.

The top candidates identified in Phase 2 will then be evaluated using a goat model. "The goat model provides results very similar to those expected from cattle, but they are obtained more rapidly and at a lower cost," states Dr. Ken Olson, JDIP Outreach Coordinator. "It is anticipated that, at the end of this process, one or more vaccine candidates will be identified for potential commercial development." Dr. Olson adds that the project, from start to finish, is expected to take approximately three years.



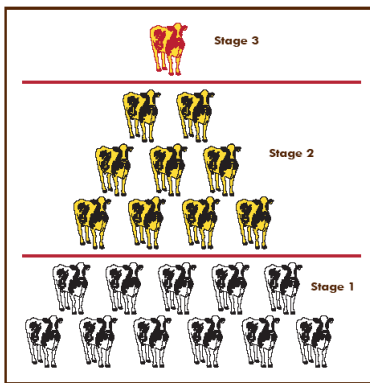
## Vaccine Project in Phase 2

In the final and terminal aspects of Stage III of the fatal disease, animals become emaciated with fluid diarrhea and develop "bottle jaw." The carcass may not pass meat inspection for human consumption in the later phases of Stage III.

## 'The Iceberg Phenomenon' – Infection in the Herd

In the typical herd, for every animal showing clinical signs (Stage III), many other cattle are present in the earlier stages of the disease. The clinical case represents only the "tip of the iceberg" of MAP infection.

For every Stage III cow you can expect: 1-2 more cows in Stage III (clinically diseased)



6-8 cows in Stage II (unapparent shedders)

10-15 cows in Stage I (infected but not shedding MAP)

The iceberg phenomenon illustrates the key concept in recognizing the potential impact that Johne's disease can have on a herd. That is, if the infection remains unchecked, the rate and number of infected animals in the herd increases progressively over time. Early diagnosis and prevention of spread, before clinical cases have surfaced, can avoid the development of Johne's disease into a significant herd problem five to ten years into the future.

**Editor's Note:** Commonly referred to as JDIP, the Johne's Disease Integrated Program is a comprehensive consortium of scientists whose mission is to promote animal biosecurity through the development and support of projects designed specifically to enhance knowledge, promote education, develop real-world solutions and mitigate losses associated with Johne's Disease. The coming together of scientists promotes efficiencies through collaborative research and sharing the intellectual and physical resources that are critical to overall success.

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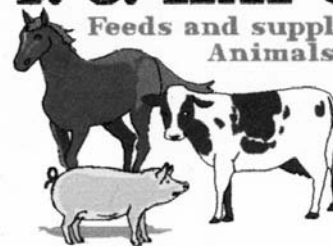
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# Vermont Grazing Conference

**P**resident Patrick McNiff attended The Vermont Grazing Conference in January, a two day event with workshops and farmer presentations. The subject of one workshop Pat attended was on hanging and cutting beef and was run by Joe Cloud, who co-owns and operates a slaughterhouse in Virginia with Joel Salatin, a new venture for them. The second day of the conference consisted of Vermont farmer presentations on grazing and working with slaughterhouses.

Pat shared the slaughterhouse/cutting floor collaboration of RIRLA since the inception of the organization, and explained how RIRLA has evolved to do scheduling for its members, allowing the organization to act as an intermediary/liaison between the member livestock producer and the slaughterhouse and cutting floor - which helps to deflate

conflicts and provide clarity - a unique relationship.

The Vermont producers don't have a similar organization to provide the same service, and expressed envy about what our organization has achieved - affirmation that we have accomplished a lot and are continually moving in the right direction.

## Members In The News

**T**he Winter 2010 issue of Edible Rhody featured members Anne Marie and Kevin Bouthillette's Blackbird Farm on the cover, with an accompanying three-page article inside. The article touches on the history and evolution of Blackbird Farm, their management practices and success at marketing their Angus beef, and the philosophy behind and commitment to preserving the Bouthillette's way of life. Anne Marie is quoted in the article as saying: "I look at this as not only passing it along to my kids, but also having grandchildren, and showing them what we did. Kevin and I did this together."

Congratulations to Anne Marie and Kevin for well-deserved recognition in a great publication!

You can go online to read this article from Edible Rhody's archives at:  
[www.ediblecommunities.com/rhody](http://www.ediblecommunities.com/rhody)



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# USDA Announces Rhode Island Women In Agriculture Conference

**W**arwick, Rhode Island, February 2, 2011 — USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD) announces the first Rhode Island Women in Agriculture Conference will be held on March 31, 2011 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm at the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus.

Recently there has been growing acknowledgement of the importance women play on farms. "Women in agriculture in the United States are an important, diverse, and often overlooked component of food systems," said Paul Brule, FSA State Executive Director.

However, the fact remains that the commercial agricultural realm within the US is still dominated by a white male workforce that is traditionally in

charge of decision-making and operation. Consequently, both white and non-white women are at a disadvantage, as they lack access to resources and the network required for the capital-intensive work of conventional farming.

The 2011 Rhode Island Women in Agriculture Conference will bring together, for the first time, farmers, educators, agricultural service providers and activists to build production and business skills, share educational and organizational strategies, and forge new connections all aimed at expanding the success of women in sustainable agriculture. This conference will celebrate farm women's accomplishments, and set the stage for future success.

Anyone interested in participating in the program, or who would like more information, should contact Shelley

Pezza, Pezza Farm Inc. at 401-943-2702 or email at [shelley12@cox.net](mailto:shelley12@cox.net) or Peggy Siligato, URI at 401-874-5997 or email at [siligato@uri.edu](mailto:siligato@uri.edu).

The Rhode Island Women in Agriculture Conference is sponsored by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD), the University of Rhode Island, the RI Department of Environmental Management, the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association (RINLA) the Rhode Island Rural Development Council (RIRDC), and the Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Council (RI RC&D).

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## Vet /Farmer Working Group

**I**n late Fall of 2009 an ad-hoc working group was formed to help address the need of livestock producers seeking veterinarians who work with their animals. Scott Marshall, the RI State Veterinarian, organized this group. In addition to livestock farmers and practicing veterinarians the group is composed of representatives from the RI Farm Bureau, representatives from Rhody Fresh, representatives from the RI Raised Livestock Association, representatives from the RI Veterinary Medical Association, representatives from the University of Rhode Island, representatives from Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, representatives from RI Rural Development, and representatives from the RI Veterinary Technicians Association. The efforts of the group have resulted in several initiatives.

Significant initiatives of the group to date are that RI veterinarians were surveyed to determine what obstacles exist to their providing veterinary services to livestock, exploration of an expanded role for veterinary technicians in providing

veterinary services, exploring educational opportunities for veterinarians to refresh their knowledge of livestock, exploration of educational opportunities for livestock producers, and networking among producers to schedule veterinary services in a way that they could be delivered more efficiently.

The results of this work are that some recommendations have been implemented. For instance, the RIRLA has listed veterinarians who are willing to work with livestock in their monthly newsletter. Another accomplishment is that the survey result indicated that several existing veterinarians would consider working with livestock if they had some refresher opportunities for continuing education. As a result, Tufts University is planning such a continuing education

opportunity. The RIVMA and URI remain supportive of educational opportunities for both veterinarians and producers and continue to support the effort of this working group.

Any livestock producer with specific ideas of how best to bridge the gap between themselves and veterinarians who are available to treat their animals should feel free to contact Dr Scott Marshall. Dr Marshall can be reached via email at [scott.marshall@dem.ri.gov](mailto:scott.marshall@dem.ri.gov), or at (401) 222-2781.



# RIRLA is pleased to introduce our new Association Coordinator, Heidi Quinn



**W**e have been very fortunate to access the talents of Heidi Quinn, who is taking on the many-faceted position of Association Coordinator. Heidi will be handling the processing/scheduling service, membership services and records, pasture walks and events, and the Association issues that come up on a day-to-day basis. Heidi initially stepped in to the processing/scheduling service on March 1, and immediately handled it as though she had been doing it for years.

Heidi grew up on a small beef farm in Richmond. She and her husband, Neil, own Pine Ridge Farm in Carolina. With the help of their two daughters, they raise a few beef cattle to direct market each year, as well as turkeys, broilers and layer

hens. A former teacher, Heidi has a BS in Elementary Education with a concentration in Animal Science. She is very active in FFA, volunteering time and support for many young adults who are interested in agriculture.

Please take a minute to stop and speak to Heidi at our Annual Meeting on March 28. We know you'll enjoy her good sense and good humor, and will feel as confident as the Board does that she will manage the affairs of RIRLA with thoroughness and professionalism.

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## RI SPECIALTY CROP GRANT PROGRAM 2011

# Availability of Farm Viability Grant Funds

**T**he RIDEM/Division of Agriculture is pleased to announce the availability of Farm Viability grant funds for the purpose of enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops grown in Rhode Island.

Specialty crops are defined by this Federally supported program as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, and nursery crops including floriculture including Christmas Trees, cut flowers, honey, hops, and turf grass production. Examples of enhancing the market competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are not limited to: Research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, "buy local" programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives. Grant applications and projects must further

the competitiveness of specialty crops only as broadly as possible in Rhode Island, and not just serve to enhance individual farm viability pursuant to USDA program guidelines. Grant funds will not be awarded for Projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

- A total of \$150,000 is available for projects with no direct match required.
- Awards will be made in amounts of \$10,000 to \$30,000 for each project.
- Any Rhode Island agricultural or educational association or organization, individual farmer, or resident is eligible to apply.

- One application per agricultural or educational association or organization, individual farmers or resident is permitted.

The DEM Agricultural Advisory Committee who will make recommendations to DEM will review applications. Downloadable applications are available on DEM's website, [www.rigrown.ri.gov](http://www.rigrown.ri.gov). Click on the For Farmers Section then look under Grants and Loans then Farm Viability Section. Applications accompanied by a W9 form, must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2011 and sent to DEM's Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade Street, Room 370, Providence, RI 02908 to be considered.

Grant related questions, should be directed to Peter Susi, Supervisor Marketing and Promotion Section at 222-2781, ext. 4517 or [peter.susi@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.susi@dem.ri.gov).  
[www.rigrown.ri.gov](http://www.rigrown.ri.gov)

### Membership Renewal

It is also time to **RENEW** your membership! This year we have revised the membership fee structure beginning at \$40 for RI residents and \$65 for out-of-state members. Full details of membership fees can be found on our web site [www.rirla.org](http://www.rirla.org). Member benefits include: access to USDA labeling; education and networking opportunities; quarterly newsletter; technical assistance; potential group marketing "Rhody Raised" line of products and more. Membership increased from 45 members at the beginning of 2008 to 73 members by January 2009 and increased to 100 in 2010. We hope to see well over 100 members during 2011.

**Please renew your  
annual membership  
by paying your dues at  
the Annual Meeting on  
March 28th.**

**Thank you for your  
continued support!**



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# A Message from the President, Pat McNiff

**A**s the outgoing president of RIRLA, I would like to take this opportunity to say that I feel privileged to have served the Livestock Association as president for the past two years, and to have made the acquaintance of many new members. The progress that has been made by the Association since I first became a member has been exciting to be a part of. I will remain an active member and participant in the Association and am confident the next president of RIRLA has equal commitment to continuing the growth of the organization.

To recap the highlights from 2010, this past year our Education branch sponsored four member-based pasture walks, two meat cutting workshops, and a lively bus tour to RI Beef & Veal and Westerly Packing.

We were also fortunate to have the SVF Foundation in Newport open their doors to us for a special behind the scenes tour for our members, a real treat as SVF only opens to the public once a year. The Education committee has been working to create a slate of similar events for 2011, to be announced soon. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend any of these past events, do try to take in at least one or two this year. These events are great

learning experiences and you won't be disappointed! The events are free for members, and there is a small charge for non-members.

The Board of Directors is very pleased to introduce you to Heidi Quinn, our new Association Coordinator. Heidi is in charge of all processing and scheduling, membership, events, and will act as the liaison for any questions you may have. Heidi has a small farm in Carolina, RI, is active in FFA, very capable and will be a great asset to RIRLA. If you haven't had the pleasure of speaking with Heidi already for your processing needs, I know you will enjoy meeting her in person at the Annual Meeting. You may contact Heidi at 401-575-3348 or at [RIRaised@gmail.com](mailto:RIRaised@gmail.com).

The RIRLA website is ever-expanding. In addition to making it convenient for members to download cut sheets, member forms and permit applications, we also now offer a classified section which is free to members. You can go to [www.rirla.org](http://www.rirla.org), click on Classifieds, under the News and Information tab and find the link to create and post your own ad. If you would like to also have your farm listed on the website, simply call Heidi Quinn at 401-575-3348, or email

[RIRaised@gmail.com](mailto:RIRaised@gmail.com), and give the information you would like to post.

Our processing scheduling service has remained active throughout the winter. The double-chambered cryovac machine at Westerly Packaging is performing well. Call Heidi Quinn to schedule animals, keep in mind that slots fill up quickly as summer approaches, and try to make your appointments well in advance to ensure that you will get the dates you want.

We had a great turnout for the Second Annual Farm Supper on November 6, 2010, held at the Smithfield Elks Lodge, with about 150 attendees. Local meat donated by RIRLA members was prepared by Russell Morin Caterers, tasted great and was well-received. A good time was had by all, we're already planning next year's Farm Supper, and we hope you will all join us.

In closing, let me say again how much I have enjoyed being President of RIRLA for the past two years, and I hope to see you all on a regular basis as we all continue to pursue our dreams and livelihoods as livestock producers.

All the best,

*Pat McNiff*

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## Second Annual Farm Supper

**O**ur Second Annual Farm Supper was held on November 6, 2010 at the Smithfield Elks Lodge in Smithfield, RI. This year's event dinner menu was expertly prepared by Russell Morin Fine Caterers of Attleboro, MA, and featured locally raised meats donated by many of our members: chicken, pork, lamb and beef. The vegetables served and even the coffee beans all came from local sources as well. Appetizers of pork and beef sausage and lamb meatballs were served first along with a squash soup, made and brought by RIRLA members, and everything received rave reviews! The event was a great success, with over

150 people in attendance.

Another successful silent auction was held, and included a great variety of items - wool throws, restaurant gift certificates, children's science kits, original art, local meat, and much more. A raffle was also held to give away the lovely table centerpieces.

Thanks to our many sponsors who helped to make our evening special - Morin's catering, Westerly Packing, SVF Foundation, RI Beef & Veal, Farm Family Insurance, Mrs. John Drexel III, as well as all our other generous sponsors.

We want to thank the fundraiser committee and all members involved who

worked hard to insure the evening went well. Plans for the next Farm Supper will be initiated soon after our Annual Meeting, and we will endeavor to make the 2011 Farm Supper even more successful and enjoyable. Please plan to attend next year!

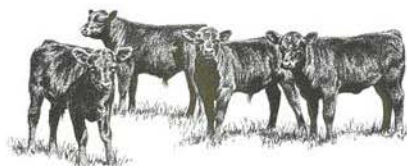


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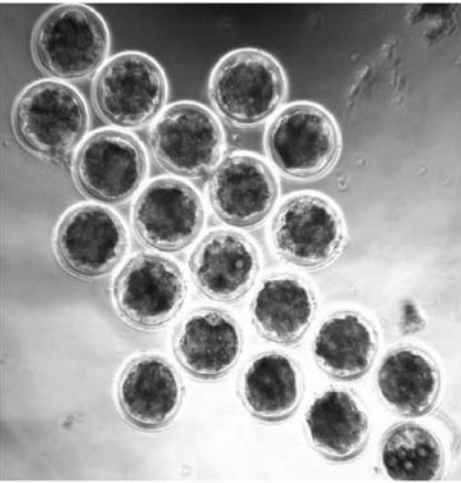
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# Homage To Chili

by Patrick M. Beck

**O**n a Sunday afternoon in early February, millions of people gathered around televisions, donned foam headgear, revived the friendly bratwurst vs. kielbasa debate, and consumed great quantities of comfort food in fellowship as the spectacle of the American football matchup came to its yearly conclusion. Cheeseheads and Stillers Fans approached tables bending under platters of hot wings, pulled pork tucked into cozy sourdough rolls and seven-layer taco dip was reverently presented to the assembled throng. But no Super Bowl buffet table can be taken seriously or be considered “dressed for the game” without a truly great bowl of chili.

This sublime marriage of stewed meat and spicy pepper gravy featuring chile peppers, cumin, oregano and garlic ranges from the simple traditional Texas “bowl of red” to an endless variety of meat, bean and vegetable offerings including the unholy Cincinnati chili which features cinnamon and allspice and is served over pasta. I can’t actually believe that otherwise respectable city would claim such an abominable concoction as their own and have always held with the conspiracy theory that this culinary train wreck was actually dreamed up by the some bitter resident of Covington, Kentucky as a way of discrediting his neighbor across the Ohio River. The official story, most likely a diversionary cover-up, involves a pair of Macedonian brothers and a hot dog stand in 1922.

Texas chili dates back to the cattle driving days of the late 19th-century when a feller needed something to stick to his ribs and sustain him through a long day in the saddle with his collar turned up against a “blue norther” howling down off the Great Plains. Beans, considered a chili staple by many, were a later addition, enabling the wagon boss to “stretch the pot” for immigrant labor crews building the railroads. To this day, beans are frowned on by the competition chili judges, though some will concede to allowing an entry to be served over stewed pinto beans.

So let’s assume you have decided to

leave Hormel in the rear-view mirror and reach for the golden ring. What goes into a spectacular chili that can make the angels weep? I use a combination of beans in my chili and found that Texas Trailhead makes a nice mix. Dump the dried beans (canned beans are mushy and lack flavor) in 3 quarts of salted boiling water to which 1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper has been added. Maintain a vigorous boil for 5 minutes then back heat down to a simmer for an hour or more until beans are almost tender (still a little toothy - you don’t want them turning to mush). Pour off 90% of the liquid and set aside.

The best chili beef isn’t in the fancy cuts, no sir. Get yourself some 100% grass-fed dry-aged chuck blade, chuck roast or top round with a little fat but not too much. I’ve heard of sirloin tip used in competition but the connective tissue in the walking-around forequarter gets my vote every time. Fat surely brings the flavor like the pass rush of the vaunted Steel Curtain of my 1970’s youth but can also coat the taste buds and mask the subtle interplay of spice notes in your well-built sauce. A good method starts with searing your meat rubbed with chili powder (I favor a mix of ancho for a memorable base note and chipotle that brings heat and smokiness to the party), salt, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder and smoked paprika in hot vegetable oil in a big cast iron pot for a few minutes till it browns up nicely. Cubed or ground? Best choice for traditional is 1/2” dice cut as the meat is half defrosted. You can grind it coarsely yourself or have a butcher do it for you. Last choice would be hamburger grind. That’s what they do in Cincinnati.

After searing, skim fat from the bottom of the pot if it is more than a thin layer, add a medium diced onion seasoned with salt and black pepper (white for competition due to up-front bite and no black flecks) and allow to sweat till it comes clear. Add your pot of beans along with other chili peppers (pasilla, New Mexico Red, cayenne, mulato) in powder form or reconstituted (dried peppers soaked in hot water for half an hour and flesh scraped off the inside. Make sure no

skin or seeds are incorporated. They can impart bitterness and will knock you out of the competition quicker than a horned frog on a hot skillet. Some folks will add a scorching Scotch Bonnet Habanero, meaner than a scorned woman, but I try to steer clear of that high-wire act. My friend John fire-roasts a jalapeno on the stovetop and tosses it in seeded and skinned. Scott uses whole canned chipotles in adobo sauce. I’ve roasted sweet red peppers in the oven rubbed with olive oil till the skins blacken then cooled in a paper bag till the skins slip right off to add volume and sweetness. Please no green bell peppers. Those are for Bengals fans.

Add a 28-oz. can of ground peeled tomatoes (careful of tomato sauce due to added sugar), 1-2 tablespoons of cumin and a good beer (a hoppy ale or a true Pilsner) and simmer for 1-2 hours. Add water if necessary to keep it from getting too thick and burning. Some competition chefs will enhance the deep earthy fragrance of the cumin by double grinding the spice or even boiling seeds in distilled water and skimming the essential oil off the surface. That’s real dedication. Add 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic (add too early and it loses its impact) and 1 tablespoon of oregano (Mexican if you can find it) and perhaps 1 teaspoon of chopped thyme (not traditional but fragrant). Always add herbs close to the end of the cooking time. Some people like chopped fresh cilantro stirred in right at the end. You can thicken the chili before serving with masa flour whisked with water to smooth consistency before being added to the pot. Masa is traditional Mexican corn flour that has been soaked in lime(stone) water, cooked, steeped, dried and ground. The alkaline processing adds calcium, makes the niacin nutritionally available and add wonderful traditional aroma and flavor. If you have any bitter flavor can be fixed with a little brown sugar. Too salty can be rescued (they say) by adding a potato.

Prepare to accept your accolades graciously.

Respecting the Protein,  
PMB

## Processing Schedule

Availability of appointments is on a first-come, first-served basis. You can request to be put on a waiting list for a particular date. The farther out you are able to schedule your appointments the more likely you are to get the dates you want. Below are listed all the available appointments through June 2010. Contact Heidi Quinn to schedule your animals: 401-575-3348 or [RIRaised@gmail.com](mailto:RIRaised@gmail.com).

March 22, 2011 Tuesday  
March 29, 2011 Tuesday  
April 5, 2011 Tuesday  
April 12, 2011 Tuesday  
April 19, 2011 Closed  
April 26, 2011 Tuesday  
May 3, 2011 Tuesday  
May 10, 2011 Tuesday  
May 17, 2011 Tuesday  
May 24, 2011 Closed  
May 31, 2011 Tuesday  
June 7, 2011 Tuesday  
June 14, 2011 Tuesday  
June 21, 2011 Tuesday  
June 28, 2011 Closed

## Calendar

**March 26, Saturday**  
RI Sheep Cooperative Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner South Foster Fire Station, Rt. 94 (Mt. Hygeia Rd.) Foster  
Doors open at 5:00 pm, Dinner at 6:00

**March 27, Sunday**  
**NOFA**  
**Soil Remediation Workshop**  
**2:00 - 5:00 pm**  
Codman Community Farms,  
58 Codman Road, Lincoln, MA.  
For more information, contact NOFA/  
Mass Metro Boston Organizer Laura  
Eppstein at (617) 913-0538, or by email  
at [laura@nofamass.org](mailto:laura@nofamass.org)

**March 28, 2011, Monday**  
**2011 Annual Meeting –**  
**RI Raised Livestock Association**  
The 2011 RIRLA Annual Meeting is coming up! There will be a trade show featuring agricultural vendors and

service providers; light dinner fare; brief, informational presentations and the chance for you to let RIRLA know what you like and what you would like to see in 2011 and beyond. Scheduled for Monday, March 28, at the Elks Hall in West Greenwich. More details to come soon. We want to hear from YOU!! Please call 401-575-3348 or email [RIRaised@gmail.com](mailto:RIRaised@gmail.com) to give your input into the planning of the meeting. And, it's also time to renew your membership or become a new member!

**March 29, 2011, Tuesday**  
**Sustaining Healthy Landscapes and Protecting our Water Resources – Best Management Practices for Small Farm Livestock Properties**  
**Carolina Fire Station**  
**Conference Room**  
**208 Richmond Townhouse Road (Route 112), Richmond, RI**  
**6:30 - 8:00 pm**

Presentations by Holly Burdett and Kristen Castrataro URI Cooperative Extension Service, Kingston, RI Please Join Us! Refreshments will be served. The Town of Richmond Conservation Commission (RCC) is pleased to sponsor this free event as part of the Town's Storm Water Management Program and the RCC's role in enhancing environmental stewardship and public understanding of sustainable, environmentally-sound land use practices in Richmond. For more information, please contact Jim Turek, RCC Chairperson at 539-9004.

**March 31, 2011, Thursday**  
**Women in Agriculture Conference – URI,**  
**Narragansett Bay Campus**  
**215 South Ferry Road,**  
**Narragansett, RI 02882**  
**8:00 a.m.– 3:30 p.m.**  
Come join us and other private entities as we explore Women in Farming. Both morning and afternoon sessions begin with opening remarks and a panel discussion, followed by three breakout sessions each to choose from. Speakers include Senator V. Susan Sosnowski,

Kristen Castrataro, Heather Minto and others – fee is \$20 and includes continental breakfast and luncheon. Questions? Contact Shelley Pezza 401-943-2707, [shelley12@cox.net](mailto:shelley12@cox.net); Peggy Siligato 401-874-5997, [siligato@uri.edu](mailto:siligato@uri.edu); RI Farm Service Agency 401-828-3120, Option 2: April 6, 2011, Wednesday.

**April 6, 2011, Wednesday**  
**Poultry Workshop Series #2:**  
**Coop Construction – New Entry Sustainable Farming Project**  
**New Entry Training Site,**  
**Dracut, MA**  
**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The NESFP Poultry Workshop Series will consist of five workshops and will cover all aspects of raising pasture poultry. A focus will be on meat bird production, ranging from coop design to processing. This field training will cover mobile poultry coop construction and electric fencing equipment. Training will include how to select housing, fencing, feeders, watering, transportation needs, storage, and equipment necessary for poultry. \$15 (free for Farm Business Planning course students and graduates). Please email [lysisson@gmail.com](mailto:lysisson@gmail.com) or [sanderson@comteam.org](mailto:sanderson@comteam.org) with any questions.

**Thursday, April 7th and**  
**Saturday, April 9th**  
**NOFA Organic Lawn**  
**Workshops For Homeowners**  
This spring, why not consider transitioning your backyard or property to an organic system? At this hands-on workshop, learn from professional landscapers how you can create a beautiful looking organic lawn. Find a location near you:  
Western Mass: Stockbridge, Boylston, Northampton, Pelham  
Eastern Mass: Stoneham, Newburyport, Natick, Danvers, Arlington, Ayer  
Southern Mass: New Bedford, Hyannis  
For more information, contact Kathy Litchfield at 413-773-3830 or email [kathy@nofamass.org](mailto:kathy@nofamass.org)



**April 12, 2011, Tuesday  
High Tunnel Twilight Meeting  
at URI**

**4:00 - 7:00 pm**

Learn about growing High Tunnel Salad and Cover crops Cost \$20 per person, includes dinner For more information, call/rsvp Kristen Castrataro at [kcas@uri.edu](mailto:kcas@uri.edu), or phone: 401-874-2967 or 401-256-7393

**May 25, 2011, Wednesday  
Poultry Workshop Series  
#3: Brooding – New Entry  
Sustainable Farming Project  
New Entry Training Site,  
Dracut, MA**

**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The NESFP Poultry Workshop Series will consist of five workshops and will cover all aspects of raising pasture poultry. A focus will be on meat bird production, ranging from coop design to processing. In workshop 3 we will cover selecting breeds and breeding programs by discussing breed selection and genetics, how to match breeds to market and pasture systems and information on selecting a hatchery. We will also cover how to construct a brooder and holistic chick health care. Please email [lysisson@gmail.com](mailto:lysisson@gmail.com) or [sanderson@comteam.org](mailto:sanderson@comteam.org) with any questions.

**June 11, 2011 SVF Foundation  
Annual Visitors Day 152  
Harrison Avenue,  
Newport, RI 02840**

**9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. FREE**

ADMISSION No parking available on site at SVF. Free parking available at Fort Adams State Park. Free trolleys will shuttle between parking area and SVF. The SVF Foundation's mission is the cryopreservation of endangered breeds of livestock. Every June for one day the public is invited to meet with our staff, veterinarians and scientific advisors at the historic Swiss Village. Along with a self-guided tour of the historic architecture and rare breed displays, our scientists will be offering liquid nitrogen demonstrations as well as in-depth explanations of the science behind cryopreservation and the need for

genetic diversity in agriculture. A selection of farm products will be available for purchase. FOR MORE INFORMATION: (401)848-7229 or e-mail [info@svffoundation.org](mailto:info@svffoundation.org) [www.svffoundation.org](http://www.svffoundation.org)

**June 22, 2011, Wednesday  
Poultry Workshop Series #4:  
Care – New Entry Sustainable  
Farming Project  
New Entry Training Site,  
Dracut, MA**

**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The NESFP Poultry Workshop Series will consist of five workshops and will cover all aspects of raising pasture poultry. A focus will be on meat bird production, ranging from coop design to processing. In workshop four we will cover general care while birds are out on pasture. This will include feed and nutritional requirements: feed rations, sources, nutritional supplements, how to analyze feed labels; pasture requirements: rotational grazing, weed management, fertility, forage quality, and pasture blends; and manure management: poultry manure and litter management and compost regulations. Please email [lysisson@gmail.com](mailto:lysisson@gmail.com) or [sanderson@comteam.org](mailto:sanderson@comteam.org) with any questions.

## Opportunities

**Seeking Vendors & Beef BBQ  
Cook-Off Participants  
Chariho Community Festival**

Announcing the first annual "Chariho Post Grad Community Festival" on May 14, 2011. We are seeking local farms to participate in our beef barbeque cook-off as well as local farms to be vendors at this event. There is no fee to participate in the cook-off, \$50 fee for vendors. If you would like to promote your farm product please consider participating at our first annual fundraising event. Vendors are not allowed to sell alcoholic beverages, or water. All vendors are required to provide their own tables, chairs, EZ up tent structure, cooking supplies, & serving supplies. For more information please contact Jane Durning Chariho Post Grad committee chairperson at: [CharihoPostGrad@hotmail.com](mailto:CharihoPostGrad@hotmail.com)

**Rhode Island Small Business  
Development Center**

The RI Small Business Development Center (RISBDC), hosted by Johnson & Wales University in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the RI Economic Development Corporation, is a program designed to provide the highest quality of business assistance services to established enterprises and promising new start-ups, including your farm business! The RI SBDC is a one-stop resource center for small and medium-sized businesses that tailors their services based on client needs. SBDC provides assistance in business plan development, market analysis, sources of capital, technology transfer, inventory assistance and other managerial and technical support services, including short-term professional counseling services e.g. financial analysis and advice (for FREE!), workshops and information services. Go to [www.risbdc.org](http://www.risbdc.org) or contact Douglas Jobling, SBDC's agricultural specialist at 401-263-5124 or [douglas.jobling@jwu.edu](mailto:douglas.jobling@jwu.edu).

**Got Equipment, Animals or Hay  
to Sell? Services to Offer?**

As part of its effort to become a true resource for farmers, RIRLA is looking to develop the "Classified" section of the RIRLA website, but we can't do it without your help! We need listings for For Sale, Services and Wanted. Listing is FREE!! Go to [www.rirla.org/bulletinboard-classifieds.htm](http://www.rirla.org/bulletinboard-classifieds.htm) to list your item, service or need.

**List Your Farm**

As a marketing service to its members the RI Raised Livestock Association is developing a list of farms that sell their locally-raised meat to the public. You must be a MEMBER of RIRLA to participate. This list is distributed to the public at outreach events, restaurants that request it, RIRLA's new consumer members as part of their membership package, as well as being available on RIRLA's website. Contact RIRLA at 401-575-3348 or [RIRaised@gmail.com](mailto:RIRaised@gmail.com) to have a form emailed or faxed to you.

## Farm Hack Invention Blogs

FarmHack is a resource for farmers who embrace the long-standing farm traditions of tinkering, inventing, fabricating, tweaking, and fixing things that they broke. Open to farmers of all ages, it has special relevance to young and beginning farmers, who may want to learn from their peers' and their elders' successes, mistakes and new ideas. Go to [www.youngfarmers.org/practical/farm-hack/forideas/](http://www.youngfarmers.org/practical/farm-hack/forideas/)

## List Your Farm – Buy Local RI

Buy Local RI is a program of the Lt. Governor's office. The Buy Local RI website is meant to connect RI's local independent businesses to consumers in the state. There are a LOT of consumers out there who want to buy local meat but don't know where or how to find it. This is a great opportunity to market your farm and its products for FREE! Go to [www.buylocalri.org](http://www.buylocalri.org) and click on the "Sign Up" icon in the upper right corner of the home page.

## \$1.3 Million Available

### RI Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office

The RI Farm Service Agency has \$1,393,000 available to lend beginning farmers to purchase a farm or to make improvements to an existing farm. Call 1-800-551-5144 or 401-828-3120 for more information.

## Large Animal Veterinary Services

**Dr. Barbara Korry, DVM** is available to provide rabies vaccinations for livestock. Appointments will be available on Monday and Tuesday mornings and Saturday afternoons, please call 401-732-4050 to schedule. Rabies certificates will be provided. Please note that if you are planning to show your animals the rabies vaccination must be administered at least 30 days before the show unless it is a booster.

**Dr. Dan Hochman, DVM** of New Canaan, CT is offering veterinary services for livestock. Please call 203-972-7387 for more information and availability.

Drs. Alice Ennis, DVM, and Cara Kneser, DVM of Brooklyn Canterbury Large Animal Clinic provide veterinary

services to Connecticut and Rhode Island. Service is limited to farm livestock, camelids and equine. Call 860-546-6998 to schedule an appointment.

**Dr. Laurie Lofton, DVM, CVH**, of Chepachet, RI provides veterinary services for large and small animals. Practice is primarily holistic, with classical homeopathy as the treatment of choice. Please call 401-568-4154, for information and scheduling.

## Events

### RIRLA Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association will be held on Monday, March 28, 2011, at the West Greenwich Elks Lodge, 42 Nooseneck Road, Rt.3, West Greenwich, RI. This meeting is open to all members and anyone interested in livestock farming in Rhode Island.

Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. for networking with vendors, service providers and other farmers.

There will be light dinner fare available, beginning at 5:30.

The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.

## Classifieds

### Sheep Shearing

For quality sheep shearing, dependable and competent farm sitting and farm work, call on Brittany Sederback at:

401-678-6915 or [agiwanuku@yahoo.com](mailto:agiwanuku@yahoo.com).

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### Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association

P.O. Box 640, N. Scituate, RI 02857

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RIRLA News is published quarterly by the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association. RIRLA's mission is "to promote the preservation of our agricultural lands, our rural economy, and our agrarian way of life by creating an organization that will secure a viable infrastructure and provide for the efficient and sustainable production, processing, and marketing of quality, value added, locally produced meats in the state of Rhode Island".

Annual membership begins at \$40 per RI farm, includes the newsletter and free classifieds on our website – [www.rirla.org](http://www.rirla.org). We also accept unsolicited donations. RIRLA News welcomes articles, photographs, letters and classified advertising for possible publication. Publication of articles or advertisements is not necessarily an endorsement by RIRLA. Articles from this newsletter may not be reprinted without permission. ©RIRLA 2010

### RIRLA Executive Board

Patrick McNiff, President, 413-9770

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**Classifieds:** 25¢/word