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***NEW* FARM WAREHOUSE LICENSE: RIRLA's Role in the DoH Rule Change Regarding Farm Warehouses**

Over the last 6 months RIRLA has been involved with licensing changes brought about by the DoH. The previously acceptable Food Warehouse license was revised, making it nearly impossible for small farms to sell wholesale to restaurants, large and small markets. Urgent change was required. Instrumental in bringing about a warehouse licensing change that was more reasonable for small farms in RI were: Ken Ayars, Chief of Div. of Ag, RI DEM;

Scott Marshall, RI State Veterinarian; and Kenneth Payne, current Administrator of the RI Ag Partnership. Kenneth Payne has had an extensive career including Senior Policy Advisor to the Rhode Island State Senate and Director of the Senate Policy Office.

At our Annual Meeting on March 19, Ken Ayars briefly referenced a possible upcoming change by the DOH that would affect the way wholesale meats would be handled through Market Mobile/Farm Fresh.

On March 30, RIRLA received an email from Farm Fresh stating that earlier that day Farm Fresh had received an email from RI DoH regarding "revamping their local meat wholesale permitting process and had decided to stop all current wholesale farm sales under the old licensing. All farms must obtain a new food processing license, but can no longer sell their meat through Farm Fresh/Market Mobile until they do. Even though the meat is USDA inspected,

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Have You Seen Our Classifieds Lately??

Looking for Animals? Equipment? Looking for Farmhands? Animals to Sell?

A black and white photograph showing a group of about seven Border Collie puppies. They are sitting on a wooden deck or boardwalk. The puppies are looking in various directions, some towards the camera. They have characteristic black and white markings.

Go to our website at www.rirla.org and check out our Bulletin Board - Classifieds page.
Herding Pups For Sale • Purebred Berkshire
Boar Service • Available Farm Hands Wanted
These are just a few of the items on our page.
Take a look and use the "Place an Ad" link if you have something to list!

Border Collie pups at Watson Farm

RIRLA Update

Submitted by Heidi Quinn, Association Coordinator



If I had managed to write this in one sitting, I could have had my choice of a cool evening; a frosty morning; comfortable 70 degree days; all preferable to this damp, muggy, 60 degree weather I am writing in now. All that in little more than a week, but it is New England after all. This morning the 1,152nd chipmunk ran in front of me in less than a week. Or maybe it was a few less, I'm not sure. I always think nature gives the critters a heads up on the weather because the more scurrying I see in early Fall, the colder it tends to get. These chipmunks have me thinking... Last winter was gentle on us, so I imagine you have your guard up going into the upcoming months. We were lucky this summer that the devastating drought, considered to be the worst since the 1950's for so much of the U.S., hardly touched New England. Parts of the region reached "abnormally dry" during the summer, but our grass is still green and the rivers still flow. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows 65% of the contiguous U.S. is in some sort of drought; over 26% in the Extreme and Exceptional categories. This reflects a small but important improvement thanks to recent rains across parts of the Mid-West.

The effects of the drought have been felt by our farms in the grain they buy, and by the consumer in the rising cost of the foods they buy. The skyrocketing cost of corn (up 60% in just 3 months) even has an effect on gasoline prices since 40 % of the corn produced in the U.S. goes to Ethanol production. For grass-based systems like ours, the rain helps to keep supplemental feed requirements low. For grass-fed livestock, the rain is critical. Weekly trips

to the feed store show the price of turkey grower going up by the dollar, not the cents. Some animals simply can't be grass-fed, and that is when the drought affects us all. The national media talks of "Bacon-geddon" in 2013. The devastated corn and soybean crops will not only raise prices of bacon, but I will go out on a limb to say pork chops still come from the same hogs. Suffice it to say prices will rise, and the consumer will again have to make a choice. Cheap, commodity meat or pricier, locally raised meat? Every consumer has a cut off and we need to respect that we all have limits for what we will pay for a given product. Where does quality and source really matter to each of us? Is it in the car we drive? The clothes we wear? The food we put unto our bodies? The local nature of what we do is what sells our products. By putting farm names out there on Marketing Lists and packaging, you become real to the consumer: You become a place and a face, not just a slab of meat or shiny produce at the major grocers. Perhaps families can drive to your farm for a visit, to pat the animals or to buy the meat. When they can meet you at a farmer's market, or when the local restaurants feature locally raised meat by name, it helps the consumer to make the right choice for themselves. When is the last time you met the folks who drilled the oil that became your gas? The folks who built your truck? The person who stitched your clothing? It is a rare person who has a connection to any of the consumables in their life, with the exception of the food they eat.

An update on how RIRLA continues to grow in regards to processing numbers. Here is a brief comparison of the first 3 quarters of 2011 vs 2012. Overall there is an increase of 24% in the total numbers of animals processed (last year we were up just 20% at this point).

Lamb has had by far the largest jump- over 70%. Once again, processing most weeks is helpful, with animals well distributed among the weeks with expected seasonal increases. Please remember to book your animals as soon as you have processing plans in mind. In addition to processing numbers increasing, each month continues to bring us new members. Planning ahead is the best way to ensure a date that fits into your marketing plans.

Finally, the months from April to August brought a new challenge to my job as Coordinator. In April, the Department of Health stopped sales of farm-raised meats to restaurants, markets and institutions. Changes had been made in the DoH Rules and Regulations farms sold "wholesale" under, and until the farms met the new Food Warehouse standards, their sales for resale—even via Market Mobile—were halted. Many meetings with DoH, DEM Division of Ag and Ag Partnership followed. The end result of this change was a new "Farm Warehouse" designation by the DoH, helping to keep small farms viable in a world of corporate meat. The full story about the journey to the Farm Warehouse License, and all those who helped us to get there, begins on page 1.

The Fall Edition of Edible Rhody hit the stands about a week ago. The Good Meat Issue features no less than 4 of our member farms as well as an article about RIRLA and its part in the local meat scene with the help of RI Beef and Veal and Westerly Packing. It is a terrific magazine and can be found free at locations around the state. Google "Edible Rhody" and check out their website for a list of advertisers who carry this free magazine!

Enjoy the changing leaves and the cooling temps as you prepare your homes, farms and animals for the cold weather to come.

Heidi Quinn

	Total Weeks of Processing Jan.-Sept.	Beef Jan.-Sept	Hog Jan.-Sept	Veal Jan.-Sept	Lamb Jan.-Sept	Total Number Animals Processed Jan.-Sept
2011	37	174	213	24	133	544
2012	38	194	221	31	228	674

(Continued from page 1)

RI Department of Health would not currently permit any wholesale farm-to-chef/grocer sales via:

Farmstand

Farmer's Market

Market Mobile

"direct delivery"- except via refrigerated truck from RI Beef, WP or their own inspected vehicle

On August 6, an Administrative Procedures Act Hearing was held at the DoH regarding proposed amendments to the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing or Holding Human Food. Specifically, amendments to provide a mechanism for registration of a Farm Warehouse as defined in the regulations.

The following is how RIRLA got involved in the DoH's rule changes. You will be happy to know that there was no action by any member (or any farmer or restaurant for that matter) to initiate this whole mess. The following takes Ken Payne's incredibly detailed answers to a bunch of questions I felt needed to be answered, some had been asked by members already, and lays out just how this all transpired.

Why did this happen?

State agencies as a matter of practice change rules when there are changes in Federal or state law, when new generally accepted "best practices" emerge that will be more effective in meeting existing statutory purposes than the practices authorized in the existing regulations, or when new conditions arise, for example: if a new water pollutant is identified, then water quality regulations may be modified to cover that pollutant. So revising and up-dating regulations is a standard and necessary bureaucratic activity, and it is usually initiated by the agency that issues the regulations. The DoH regulations were not designed to shut down sales of locally raised meat to local restaurants; the Department assumed all businesses in RI had to comply with US Food and Drug Administration standards because RI small businesses were engaged in interstate commerce, and that if a firm was complying with US FDA standards,

the new DoH standards would not be a substantial additional burden.

Why did RIRLA get involved?

RIRLA did exactly what a membership association should do. When it became apparent that the new DoH regulations would affect a number of farmers adversely, RIRLA acted to identify common issues and offer a collective response. This is when the Ag Partnership called Heidi to say Director Ken Payne offered to volunteer his services. His experience with legislative procedure and policy making made him an ideal person

RIRLA almost by necessity had a central role to play.

to help RIRLA find a way through this mess, to help not just our members, but all RI farmers who sell their local meat to restaurants and through Market Mobile. Since regulations are not developed on a case by case basis, but are general in their application, changes to rules and policies are logically undertaken in a general manner that applies fairly to all members of a class of persons/parties. Enforcement actions are case by case; rule making is general. Thus a general position about what needed to be done was vitally important. RIRLA almost by necessity had a central role to play. It did exactly what associations are supposed to do.

Why did we need Ken Payne?

Ken had just taken over as Director of the RI Ag Partnership when this all began. He was approached by Ken Ayars, Janet Coit, Josh Miller and Nicole Poepping among others, to ask for his assistance with this problem. Ken was able to explain to our Working Group just how this was being looked at from the DoH perspective. He became our translator of sorts. We set out our position to Ken, explaining the existing permits and policy, the way we were implementing it and our understanding of the rules as they existed. Ken helped us to present our position properly to the Governor and appropriate legislators, in the form of a proposal to address the stoppage of sales and impending "warehouse

regulations" that would now apply to local farms. Ken was also a great help explaining much of the meaning behind the Rules and Regulations and subsequent correspondence from the State. Ken showed the State that policy issues were involved and that a policy/regulatory approach could resolve the matter. Luckily, no enforcement actions were ever taken.

Since state agencies generally do rule making, what RIRLA submitted to the Chafee administration was a proposal (originally drafted by Ken Payne) whereby existing arrangements, with performance standards, could be used to resolve the issues. It would have been legally possible to petition DoH for rule making under the Administrative Procedures Act, but such petitions are extremely rare. (In an emergency adoption, the rules are then effective only for a brief period of time. The emergency adoption must be followed by regular adoption, or the rules go out of effect. The necessity of emergency adoption can be challenged, and agencies are wary of using the emergency process.) The Administration/DoH response essentially said that it would prefer to resolve the matter by amending its rules; this is a pretty standard response and does a good job in providing clear, long term stability. The differences between the RIRLA proposal and the DoH regulations have more to do with form than with substance, but both represented policy changes that recognized existing arrangements. RIRLA's proposal would have been accomplished by an administrative agreement (a modification to the DEM-DoH Memorandum of Understanding), the DoH's plan is accomplished by rule making followed by implementation.

Why did RIRLA send an email asking if we were affected by the shut down?

By showing the economic need for prompt action, RIRLA effectively presented a case for expedited implementation. A program for expedited implementation is moving forward thanks to the list of farms affected (now or in the future) by the shutdown of meat sales to restaurants.

There was an Administrative Procedures Act Hearing on Monday, August 6.

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Shouldn't we have had as many members attend as possible? Administrative Procedures Act hearings are strange rigid affairs, there is no give and take, there is no discussion. Their only purpose is to receive testimony, pro and con, on the specific language of the regulation as drafted. An agency is barred from adopting a rule in an arbitrary or capricious manner and must take into account testimony placed into the record. If it turns out that major revisions to the proposed rule are needed, the process starts all over again; if no major substantive changes are needed, the agency can file regulation with the Secretary of State. Agencies provide a written response to all comments received, this documents that the agency has considered evidence placed in the record. The more numerous and complex the comments, the longer process for responding.

What Ken said at the DoH hearing was: (a) that the proposed regulation creating the category of "farm warehouse" is necessary and appropriate under Rhode Island law

(b) that the proposed regulation is a fair and workable means of addressing issues pertaining to meat coming from RI farms while assuring public health protections

(c) that Ken looks forward to working with DoH and DEM to provide for a smooth, reasonable and expeditious implementation of the new regulations.

Ken Ayars also spoke to the proposed regulation and DEM's Division of Agriculture continuing their part in this. Heidi delivered a letter from Will as President of RIRLA, saying essentially: The RI Raised Livestock Association believes that the proposed amendment creating the category of "farm warehouse" can be implemented in a manner that accomplishes these objectives in a fair and workable manner. For that reason and to facilitate the resolution of the current economic hardships being borne by many members of the Association, the RI Raised Livestock Association recommends the prompt adoption of the proposed amendment as written.

RI Raised Livestock Association is prepared to work with the Department of Health and the Department of Administration to achieve smooth implementa-

tion of the proposed amendment establishing the category of "farm warehouse".

Having RIRLA take essentially the same position strengthened the case and provided additional momentum for getting things right in implementation. Perfectly good and reasonable rules can become a nightmare in implementation. This has nothing to do with the content of the rule itself but is rather a function of the behavior of the bureaucracy. Ken was more concerned about how the new definition is applied than he is about the new definition in the rule itself. We needed to get the rule making behind us, and move as rapidly as possible into the implementation phase. This is where we want it to be, back on the farm.

Under the Administrative Procedures Act, rules become effective (i.e. have the force of law) twenty (20) days after they are filed by the agency with the Secretary of State. This enables persons a fair opportunity to know what is on the books before enforcement takes place. Once the regulation is filed the mechanics of implementation could commence, binding actions would necessarily not be part of the picture until the twenty day period had been completed. The hearing went smoothly and the changes were submitted to the Secretary of State on August 16, 2012 and became effective on September 4, 2012

That took a while, didn't it? This is almost lightning speed; new regulations often take nine months to develop and promulgate, and another six months to implement. RIRLA will really have been engaged in the current effort for four months at the end of August. It has often seemed slow, with lots of effort and little certainty about outcome; it has not been "fun" but has been necessary. Nevertheless, Ken Payne said he has really enjoyed working with RIRLA. The Association has done what it needed to do to achieve constructive progress on a difficult issue. From Ken: "Now we need to put in place a system to prevent this kind of thing from happening again, and this is a job for the Ag Partnership, the members and leadership of RIRLA can go back to tending their farms."

Wrapup

On August 31, 2012, the new Farm Warehouse Permit Application was sent

to RIRLA, becoming effective on September 4, 2012. As expected, there were a few questions that I went back to Ken Ayars to have answered. At this time, all farms that Wholesale have had the permit sent to them so that they can submit it to DoH. All RI farms were subsequently emailed the licensing information. In order to answer any questions about, and clarify all of the above, RIRLA held an informational meeting at the Louttit Library Community Center in West Greenwich, RI on September 24, 2012, at 7:30 p.m. Ken Payne, Ken Ayars and Scott Marshall spoke to over 20 attendees about the regulatory/ legislative and permitting aspects of this new Farm Warehouse License designation. An overview of setting up your meat storage location for any of the applicable permits was also discussed.

*Submitted by Heidi Quinn,
Association Coordinator*

Third Annual RIRLA Farm Supper



Focus on the DoH regulation change threw us off course for a bit, but we must make mention of RIRLA's Third Farm Supper in May, and the sponsors who are featured in this newsletter! The event was held at the lovely Addieville Farm in Mapleville, RI., and the folks at Addieville generously waived their rental fee for us. The weather cooperated and it was a lovely evening. We had about 100 attendees.

The menu consisted entirely of a combination of locally grown meats and vegetables and locally produced food. B&M Caterers handled all the preparation and cooking of the meats and side dishes, and did a superb job!

The organization realized approximately a \$4,000 profit through ticket sales and the generous donations of supporters. We thank all those who contributed their time and support, and look forward to hosting another farm supper in the future!

Beef Over 30 Months.

What exactly does that mean? And why should we care?

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) aka "Mad Cow Disease"

Submitted by Heidi Quinn, Association Coordinator

So you've sent your Processing Order Form and payment to RIRLA (Thank you!) and you've enclosed a check for \$115 per beef animal. A couple of weeks later, an email arrives from Heidi to tell you that "your beef animal(s) invoiced back at over 30 months of age as determined by the eruption of the third tooth. This requires removal of the spine per USDA regulation and incurs an extra \$60 charge per animal." Who cares how old they were? I already had to raise them longer, now I lose out by paying an additional \$60? Why didn't I get back my T-Bones and Porterhouse steaks?

Let's begin with "who cares?" The government cares and you should too. In 2003, the first case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.S. was detected in a Holstein that had been imported from Canada in 2001. As of late 2011, there had been only 3 cases of BSE detected in the U.S., the last in 2006. Unfortunately, a 4th case was detected in California in April 2012. BSE is a progressive neurological disorder of cattle that results from infection by an unusual transmissible agent called a prion. Currently, the most accepted theory is that the agent is a modified form of a normal protein known as prion protein. For reasons that are not yet understood, the normal prion protein changes into a pathogenic (harmful) form that then damages the central nervous system of cattle.

BSE was initially recognized in cattle in the UK in 1986; there is good information that it had not occurred before then. Epidemiological research led to the conclusion that the bovine agent had originated from the scrapie agent, which had been present in sheep in the United Kingdom for at least 200 years. It is presumed, but will likely never be proven, that the scrapie agent jumped species and moved into cattle when sheep offal (the leftover parts of butchered animals) was

included in protein supplements fed to cattle. After cattle started to die, cattle carcasses and offal were included in the same protein supplements -- this seems to have amplified the epidemic.

The BSE epizootic (the term for an epidemic among animals) in the United Kingdom peaked in January 1993 at almost 1,000 new cases per week. In 1992-93 over 71,000 cattle died from BSE. Over the next 17 years, the annual numbers of BSE cases dropped sharply;



14,562 cases in 1995, 1,443 in 2000, 225 in 2005 and 11 cases in 2010. Cumulatively, through the end of 2010, more than 184,500 cases of BSE had been confirmed in the United Kingdom alone in more than 35,000 herds. But millions of other cows have been destroyed because they were too old to go into human or animal food.

I know that animal couldn't be over 30 mths! Unfortunately, most animals we are dealing with do not have the traceability to determine their exact age at the date of slaughter. Eruption of the third permanent incisor is the FSIS standard indicating that an animal is 30 months of age or older. Relying on the eruption of the third permanent incisor as the standard to verify cattle are 30 months of age may cause some cattle 24 through 29 months of age to be identified as 30

month of age. (USDA FSIS Guidelines.) The 30 mth cutoff was chosen because only a couple of cases of BSE worldwide have been shown in cattle under 30 mths; this is combined with experiments that suggest it is not possible for BSE to infect the brain of an animal under 30 mths.

Did I have to lose some of my best steaks? The vertebral column is the part of the skeleton which, in life, contains the spinal cord. The connections of the spinal cord to the nerves throughout the body are facilitated by structures known as Dorsal Root Ganglia. These are tiny junction boxes which lie very close to the spinal cord, within or close to the vertebral column. In bovine animals over 30 months of age the BSE-related risk associated with these structures is deemed sufficient to warrant their removal from the food chain as Specified Risk Material (SRM). Removal of the vertebral column manages the risk posed by these structures. There are vacuum systems that can remove the spinal material, leaving the vertebral column intact so that the T-Bone and Porterhouse steaks are available on over 30 mth

animals. Currently RI Beef and Veal does not have plans to purchase this system, and though you "lose" the T-Bone and Porterhouse steaks, you will receive the Tenderloin and Kansas City/NY Strip Steaks instead.

If you think removing the spine in over 30 mth animals is strict and inconvenient, consider this: The most stringent control measures included a UK program that ran from March 1996 to November 2005, excluding all animals more than 30 months of age from the human food and animal feed supplies. Millions were simply slaughtered. The program was highly effective in reducing BSE in the UK. Several "step-down" stages have occurred since then, finally allowing the slaughter of OTM cattle for human consumption. Today there are still incredibly rigid

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requirements in the UK for slaughter of animals over 30 mths, requiring only approved abattoirs be used for "OTM" animals. OTM carcasses are transported to a separate plant for spinal column removal. Each OTM animal is tested for BSE. The amount of paperwork, rule and oversight is nearly unbelievable.

As an example, here is how the Galloway Meat Company of South West Scotland handles the new system. Since their grass-fed Galloway and Highland Cattle need over 30 mths to mature to ideal slaughter conditions, they explain the process they follow on their website: "All animals aged over 30 months must now be taken to an approved abattoir licensed to slaughter at such an age and these premises and activities are subject to the most intense scrutiny by

PROCESSING SCHEDULING SERVICE

Processing Order Form

Government employed veterinary staff. It will be appreciated that, under this very rigid regime, the standards of traceability imposed by even the Soil Association are enhanced still further.

The great preponderance of beef now sold by the Galloway Meat Company (GMC) is aged over 30 months and uniquely, we believe, we offer complete traceability of the meat which we supply. Each packet of meat features the identifying number and breed of the individual animal slaughtered and butchered, together with its dates of birth, slaughter and butchery. A full medical and feeding history of each is retained.

Meat from one animal is never mixed with another in the processing of any GMC mince, sausages, burgers or other product unless the packaging expressly states as such. In any event, the packaging will always be clearly labeled with the identifying numbers and breed(s) of each animal comprising the product." That certainly makes our entire system seem incredibly simplified.

AgriPlan Saves Farmers Over \$4000 Annually on Healthcare Expenses.

AgriPlan converts health care expenses, premiums and out of pocket expenses, such as deductibles, co-pays, prescriptions, dental and vision into a business deduction, saving federal, state and FICA



taxes on those expenses for the farming operation. Which results in an average of over \$4000 worth of savings annually by using AgriPlan.

Farming operations qualify at high rate because of the nature of their small business model. Farming spouses usually

help in some manner in day to day tasks. AgriPlan is a program that is administered by TASC (Total Administrative Services Corporation). TASC has been working with Agricultural communities across America since the 1970's and has over 30,000 active plans nationwide. Farmers using AgriPlan stay on the plan for an average of 9-10 years (usually only stopping when their family or farming situation changes).

In order to qualify for AgriPlan savings, your spouse's involvement in the farm is essential. This results in the healthcare expenses running through that spouse/employee making those expenses 100% deductible. TASC makes the whole process easy with the TASC card, a debit card that can be used for medical expenses, prescriptions and co-pays at the doctor's office. TASC offers an Audit Guarantee and a Savings Guarantee

included with AgriPlan to give farmer's peace of mind.

Besides the married Sole Proprietor, other business entities such as LLC's, Partnerships, C Corporations and S Corporations can save with AgriPlan, please check with John Howard at Farm Family to find out if your farming operation will qualify.



Contact John Howard, Farm Family in West Greenwich at 401-397-1050 or Gene Hamilton, TASC Rhode Island Director in Warwick at 401-327-0166.

RIRLA - A Primer

Submitted by Jane Christopher

In light of other information and news featured in this newsletter, I thought it a good time to present a brief history of the Association for all our newer members; how it came to exist, the founding farmers who developed and drove it, what options for selling meat existed before farmers pushed for change, and what the process has been to get the organization to where it is now. I came on board late in 2007 - but the organization had a few years of startup effort prior to

restaurant in a manner deemed legal. As a producer, available options were to process your meat at small, local custom butcher establishments or to ship to larger facilities, such as Adams in western MA or to Stafford Enterprises in Stafford Springs, CT for a USDA inspected product (two of the the closest USDA facilities to Rhode Island); or, in some cases even further to New York, Vermont or even Pennsylvania. You were able to use your meat for your own consumption; you

could make a significant difference to their bottom line. But the RIDoH said it was impossible to sell without a USDA federal label and it wasn't going to be possible. The Minto's response was, "Why not?" Don & Heather managed to obtain a USDA label via direction from inspectors at one out-of-state slaughterhouse they used, which they presented to RI's DoH. The DoH responded with more requirements, details and restrictions. The Mintos persisted, doing their homework by researching what was required in other states, in order to present a label the RIDoH would consider in compliance with their regulations.

Don sent in a permit application to RIDoH to sell at Coastal Growers Farmers Market for its first year. A year went by and no permit came forth. In the second year the DoH did come to Watson Farm for a visit and inspected the Minto's farm facility. The inspector made recommendations for compliance, and the Mintos did what was necessary to conform to them. The DoH gave the green light and issued their permit. A dozen other farmers were also ready to apply for permits. But the DoH inspectors were giving different requirements and permit information to every different farmer. Each inspector seemed to have a different set of requirements, and consistency didn't seem to be the operative word for conforming to what was needed. Although forward progress was being made - at least the DoH was making inspections - it was a confusing process. However, to be clear and fair, this was also a new issue for the RIDoH; they too were navigating as yet uncharted waters. Being tasked with the business of ensuring the good health of a state's population, they weren't anxious to act so quickly as to potentially jeopardize public health. They were doing their job.

At one point during the process, Don shared the farmers' frustrations with Ken Ayars, RI's head of the Division of Agriculture. Ken took an immediate interest, and began attending meetings at the DoH with Don. Having all types of farmers in Rhode Island flourish and prosper was (and is) a goal for the Division of Ag. The local food movement



that, and I wasn't familiar with all that had transpired. I recently sat down for a conversation with Don and Heather Minto from the Watson Farm in Jamestown, to ask for some of their memories as an overview. Don & Heather were the early driving force behind the Association, and Don was RIRLA's first president. They, with the other dedicated people mentioned in this article, established the organization and built its foundation based on a common purpose and sense of unity, and a desire to strengthen the local agricultural community by making their farms more economically viable. Here's what I came away with:

As recently as 8 or 9 years ago, no Rhode Island livestock producer was able to sell meat by the cut directly to the public, or to sell wholesale to a

could sell a whole animal "on the hoof" or divide your animals into halves or quarters and share costs with others; but in the Department of Health's view, you were not able to legally sell even meat processed in a USDA inspected facility to a customer by the cut.

In 2003/4, Don & Heather began the then confusing process of obtaining a permit from the Rhode Island Department of Health to sell their meat. The Coastal Growers Farmers Market was about to open for the first time, and it looked like it would be a great opportunity and outlet for selling their beef and lamb, if they could get the go ahead from Rhode Island's DoH. The potential for a livestock producer to make more profit by getting the lion's share of the food dollar selling their meat by the cut through direct sales

was growing, and Ken worked tirelessly to advocate for all farmers. Fred Launer, a former USDA meat inspector, was also working for the Division of Agriculture. (Fred currently teaches Animal Science at URI) He, too, was instrumental in moving things forward. Fred helped open the door to negotiations with RI Beef and Veal.

All the while, Don and Heather were talking to other livestock producers - Theresa Oatley¹, Valda Oatley Aponik², Sherry Griffiths³, Bill and Kim Coulter⁴, Nina Luchka⁵, Kevin & Ann Marie Bouthilette⁶, Will & Heidi Wright⁷, George & Martha Neale⁸ - and they were gathering to share ideas. Early get togethers were held around the Minto's kitchen table, and soon they were taking turns at one another's homes. Meetings focused on local infrastructure. A Mission Statement was drafted and other farmers were beginning to take notice. Getting permits was a primary interest. Secondary to that was finding more USDA facilities. When Massachusetts-based Adams burned to the ground in 2006 and that resource was temporarily gone, the group tested new slaughterhouses in Vermont and New York. All the plants in the East Coast were surveyed, and spread sheets were made to compare services and prices. The feeling of camaraderie and unity grew between the group. They all wanted to be able to do what they loved, see a profit, and to justify continuing to raise animals. Producers who normally operated independently were working together to cut costs on shipping to the out-of-state USDA facilities they were all using by grouping and coordinating shipments, organizing trucking and sharing expenses. They occasionally hired a trucker. They took turns driving trailer loads of combined animals to slaughterhouses. Don might take a load in his trailer. Kim Coulter would drive a load. Anyone who could, would. Shipments were being brought back to a rented centrally-located refrigerated warehouse location (also approved by the DoH) for pickup and dispersed to each producer.

There were a few nightmares along the



way, too. One processor held the Minto's lambs for a week before they were killed and then hung them for 5 weeks, not the usual 5 days. From a 50 lb. hanging weight on a lamb, they got back 9 pounds of meat. There were additional slip ups from other processing facilities. None are ever perfect; add a three or six hour drive one way into the mix, and it can add to a helpless feeling. How many of us can afford the time away from our farms to drive that far to check on our shipments

**In the spirit of unity
with which this
organization began, it is
vital for all farmers to
support one another.**

that we've already driven that length of time just to drop off? With diesel at \$4 a gallon, and gas not far behind, the fuel costs alone were prohibitive.

Still, this was the beginning of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association. The whole intention in these early days was to have local farmers working together, with a common vision and a goal to create an in-state processing infrastructure. The sense of "united we stand, divided we fall" was strong. No one was working to compete with one another, there was business enough for everyone. A "Kickoff" meeting was held by the group in 2007, and bit by bit the membership grew.

As well as having Ken Ayars on the side of the organization, other folks, particularly Gerry Bertrand, of Rhode Island Rural Development, were very helpful in

getting grants to help the group. It became apparent then that the organization had to become a "legitimate" entity. Grant money enabled the group to hire and pay one employee, Kim Ziegmayer, for a time as a Director who could devote significant time to the organization, and a 501(C)5 non-profit status with an educational component was gained in 2008.

Simultaneously, an alliance was created between RIRLA with RI Beef and Veal and Westerly Packing in the winter of 2007-2008 - the only USDA inspected kill and packing facilities in the state of RI, who did not, as a rule, cater to outside "clientele". This alliance realized the goal of having a local infrastructure in place, and eliminated the need to ship animals long hours out of state. By engaging these two facilities into an agreement out of their normal working situations, and charging members a fee to cover the cost of the shipping between RI Beef to Westerly, RIRLA was able to make just enough money (with the help of the Farm Supper fundraisers) to cover the cost of their one employee when grant money ran out. The volunteer services of others plus advertising fees run the newsletter; the Board of Directors and a small group of volunteers keep the organization going.

During these first critical years of "legitimacy", the organization web site was initiated, the first two fund raising "Farm Suppers" were held. Educational seminars, meat cutting workshops, private tours at Newport's SVF Foundation were held and continue to be offered every year. Occasional member farm "pasture walks" are popular, and these can be most informative and enjoyable. How often does it happen that farmers take the time to visit other farm locations? To share information and methods, and above all, realize that there are more people with similar interests and passions, willing to share knowledge, gives one a comforting feeling of place and presence.

This past summer saw representatives from the organization deeply involved with working with the DoH on new regulations, with guidance from Ken Ayars and Scott Marshall (RI's State Vet), and RIRLA found a great ally and

source of help in Ken Payne, head of the Ag Partnership in RI. Heidi Quinn has thoroughly explained the details of these new regulations in our main article that begins on the first page of this newsletter. If you haven't already, please take the time to read it. Heidi has been the organization's mainstay this past year and a half, and she has done a superb job handling this situation, on top of all her regular duties.

The initial goals set by the Association back before 2007 have been reached, and the educational component of what we do has exceeded the original expectations. The systems in place for processing may not be completely perfected yet, but we continually strive to make both the permitting process easier and understandable to our members,

and to keep the lines of communication smooth. The Association will continue to update our members of any further developments or changes and will work with the Division of Ag and DoH on any new concerns that may arise.

I think we can all feel good about how the livestock industry is growing in Rhode Island, and be proud to be a part of the expanding local food movement. If you choose to market your meat in a way that requires permits from the DoH, then your part, as members, will be to responsibly work within the parameters set out by the DoH and Division of Ag. The Association isn't here to police you, but is here to provide you with a means of local processing, to ease the permitting paperwork, and provide some education along the way.

In the spirit of unity with which this organization began, it is vital for all farmers to continue to respect and support one another. Work together, strive to fulfill the mission of providing healthy, nutritious product to our customers and neighbors, and in so doing continue to build our local food economy. In the process, all of us, as independent producers will together create a positive and sustaining livestock industry that continues to grow and prosper.

Please treat each other well.

1. Oatley Farm, Exeter
2. Aponik Farm, Exeter
3. Griffiths & Sons Farm, Foster
- 4, 5. Stoney Hill Cattle Co., Wood River Junction
6. Blackbird Farm, Smithfield
7. Hidden Meadows Farm, W. Greenwich
8. Windmist Farm, Jamestown

Processing Paperwork - It's for Every Drop Off

A couple of farmers mentioned to me that they thought the Specialty Items Shipping Ticket was for hogs only. This newly renamed form does have Skin/Scald near the top, but you will note it also has always listed Beef and Lamb as well. This Form is multi-purpose and covers the Skin/Scald options for hogs, as well as letting RI Beef know if you wish to save hides or any organs from your animal(s). It is very important to include this form for

every drop off at RI Beef, regardless of species, or whether or not you want to save the hide or organs. The Shipping Tickets travel with your animals on the truck from RI Beef to Westerly Packing. This is the only paperwork that you drop off at RI Beef to identify your farm and connect your animals to your farm, so please remember to give it to the guys at the dock. I hope this clears up any confusion!

Also, processing forms are all available for download from our website at <http://www.rirla.org/processing/scheduling/service.htm>. The Processing Form is always required when you send in your payment. Your check stays with Jane and the paperwork is then sent to Heidi to be entered into the records. If you would like a master copy of the forms to keep on hand, please call or email Heidi and I will send you out a copy of each form. You can then make copies when needed. As an additional reminder, payment is due BEFORE your animals are shipped. Occasionally an animal is scheduled at the last minute so the paperwork and payment may arrive a day or two

later. However, it would be appreciated if payments were sent in by the date of processing. Thanks for your help with this and a huge Thank You to all the farms who always send the Processing Forms, and to those who always send their payment promptly. It is greatly appreciated.

New for Processors – Letter of Guarantee

All numbered/processing farms were sent this via email. It states that your animals (beef, hog, veal, lamb and goat) have not been fed prohibited feed materials and do not have an illegal level of drug residue. It needs to be read, signed and returned to RIRLA via mail, or you can scan it and send via email. RI Beef needs them on file per the USDA for you to process your animals. I will be giving RI Beef copies and keeping a copy for our records also. It needs to be submitted only once and will be kept on file. Thank you to the large number of farms who have already submitted this!

Please contact me if you did not receive this, but are a processor. I will be happy to mail a copy to processing farms who do not use email, and have not been given the form at RI Beef and Veal.

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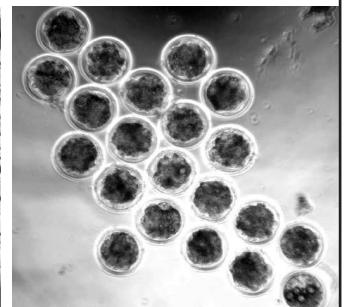
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SVF FOUNDATION

svffoundation.org

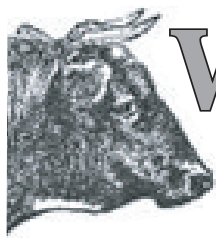
SVF Foundation is a non-profit collaborating with Tufts veterinarians to preserve unique genetic traits of livestock. If you are interested in learning more about our scientific mission please visit www.svffoundation.org



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Beef, poultry 401-849-0337 jim@farmscapesllc.com www.aquidneckfarms.com

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Beef, pork, poultry
401-578-3959 blackbirdfarm122@yahoo.com www.facebook.com/blackbirdfarm

Breene Acres Family Farm – West Greenwich, RI

Poultry, pork 401-397-4748 lauren.breene@gmail.com

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Microgreens 401-294-5203 info@farmingturtles.com

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Hidden Meadows Farm – W. Greenwich, RI

Beef, pork 401-392-4269 hiddenmeadowsfarm@gmail.com

Lightning Ridge Farm – Sherborn, MA

Lamb 508-653-3212 www.freewebs.com/lightningridgefarm jnen@aol.com

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Twin Peaks Land & Cattle Co. – Wakefield, RI

Beef 401-789-8642 betco44@gmail.com

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Windmist Farm – Jamestown, RI

Lamb, pork, beef, poultry 401-423-1809 mneale13@hotmail.com www.windmistfarm.com

Wrights Dairy Farm & Bakery - North Smithfield, RI

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Just For Fun

A Minnesota farmer named Olie had a car accident. He was hit by a truck owned by the Eversweet Company.

In court, the Eversweet Company's hot-shot attorney questioned him thus: 'Didn't you say to the state trooper at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine?'

Olie responded: 'vell, I'lla tell you vat happened dere. I'd yust loaded my fav'rit cow, Bessie, into da... '

'I didn't ask for any details', the lawyer interrupted. 'Just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine!''

Olie said, 'vell, I'd yust got Bessie into da trailer and I vas drivin' down da road.... '

The lawyer interrupted again and said, 'Your Honor, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the police on the scene that he was fine. Now several weeks after the accident, he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question. '

By this time, the Judge was fairly interested in Olie's answer and said to the

attorney: 'I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favorite cow, Bessie'.

Olie said: 'Tank you' and proceeded. 'vell as I vas saying, I had yust loaded Bessie, my fav'rit cow, into de trailer and was drivin' her down de road vin dis huge Eversweet truck and trailer came tundering tru a stop sign and hit me trailer right in da side by golly. I was trown into one ditch and Bessie was trown into da udder ditch.

By yimminy yahosaphat I vas hurt, purty durn bad, and didn't want to move. An even vurse dan dat, I could hear old Bessie a moanin' and a groanin'. I knew she vas in terrible pain yust by her groans.

Shortly after da accident, a policeman on a motorbike turned up. He could hear

Bessie a moanin' and agroanin' too, so he vent over to her. After he looked at her, and saw her condition, he took out his gun and shot her right between the eyes.

Den da policeman came across de road, gun still in hand, looked at me, and said, 'How are you feelin'?

'Now wot da heck vud you say?'



Processing Schedule

RIRLA processes livestock year-round. All upcoming dates shown below are still open to hog, lamb and veal unless otherwise noted. Scalded hogs are only processed on Wednesdays. Available beef slots are shown.

October 23, 2012 Tuesday- 8 Beef Slots Open
October 30, 2012 Tuesday- 3 Beef Slots Open
November 6, 2012 Tuesday- 7 Beef Slots Open
November 13, 2012 Tuesday- 4 Beef Slots Open
November 20, 2012 Tuesday- CLOSED to ALL species - Thanksgiving
November 27, 2012 Tuesday- 3 Beef Slots Open
December 4, 2012 Tuesday- 5 Beef Slots Available

If you would like to schedule processing, please reply to Heidi by email (riraised@gmail.com), or call 401-575-3348.

Calendar

**Wednesday, October 24, 2012
7PM**

**“History of Swiss Village and Arthur Curtiss James’
Newport Properties”**

Presented by Francis X. Girr

Local historian, Francis X. Girr, will take us on a pictorial journey through the development of Swiss Village, originally named Surprise Valley Farm by Arthur Curtiss James. He will also present information on Arthur Curtiss James, his father Daniel Willis James, and surrounding properties owned by the Jameses, including Belvoir, its successor Beacon Hill House, and Edgehill. Mr. Girr offers seminars at Salve Regina University’s Circle of Scholars on the Missing Mansions of Newport, and has an extensive teaching background in both English and business communications.

Please check back soon for additional dates and topics to be presented in this ongoing series.

**Monday, October 29, 2012
7:00 p.m.**

**RIRLA Meeting
Louttit Library
Community Center
274 Victory Highway
West Greenwich, RI**

(Library is adjacent to the West Greenwich Police Department- Community Center is behind library)

**3rd Annual Fiber Festival of
New England
November 3-4**

Presented by Eastern States Exposition
& New England Sheep & Wool Growers Association
Located in the Mallary Complex at Eastern States Exposition

Workshops, Trainings and Educational Opportunities

NRCS Workshop Series: Conservation Plans & Practices

In partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Rhode Island, URI is developing and conducting field and classroom training sessions that focus on the planning and adoption of conservation plans and practices. The goal is to improve the knowledge and skills required of farmers and landowners to engage in and benefit from the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Specific Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) are being addressed with an upcoming workshop series. All interested citizens are welcome to participate; you do not need to be enrolled in a NRCS Program. Workshops are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required. Please contact Holly Burdett, URI Cooperative Extension, at (401) 874-2249 or hburdett@uri.edu

**Nutrient Management Plan
Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012
URI East Farm Bldg. 75**

Details to be posted.

USDA Rural Development and the Rhode Island Farm Energy Program for a Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Workshop!

**Wednesday, December 5, 2012
from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon
West Greenwich Community
Center (behind Louttit Library)
274 Victory Highway (Rte 102 N)
West Greenwich, RI**

- The first of two REAP informational sessions offered to farm producers, rural small business owners, grant writers and installers.

- Anne Correia, Area Specialist with USDA Rural Development will give a general overview of the REAP program, covering such topics as grant assistance available, eligibility requirements, site requirements, and program guidelines.

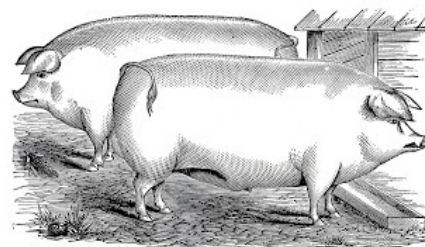
- Representatives/speakers from area renewable energy businesses will be present to answer technical service questions about geothermal, photovoltaic (PV), wind and biomass systems; plus RI DG.

- A simplified grant application will be reviewed and discussed covering timely and key points of the application process. Applications will be provided.

- Register by telephone RI RC&D at 401-500-0399 or by email info@rifarmenergy.org

- Be sure to let us know your name, where you are from, how many seats you will need, and the project/technology that you are interested in.

USDA – Rural Development
Anne Correia, Area Specialist
15 Cranberry Highway
West Wareham, MA 02576
508-295-5151 ext.136



Classifieds

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For quality sheep shearing, dependable and competent farm sitting and farm work, call on Brittany Sederback at: 401-678-6915 or agiwanuku@yahoo.com. If you need help with shearing, or want to take a well-deserved vacation, give her a try!



Border Collie Puppies

Watson Farm has purebred Border Collie pups for sale. From working parents, both of which work cattle and sheep daily. Excellent genetics, terrific farm dogs. Ready to go at 8 weeks on October 1. Call Don or Heather for more information. 401-423-0005
Posted: September 19, 2012

Blue Heeler Puppies

Blue heeler "cattle dog" puppies coming soon. Not papered. Father is a trained working dog. Call for details. Great parents! Asking \$350 each and will reserve puppies for \$200 deposit. 401-932-8698
Posted: September 6, 2012

Barter Purebred Berkshire Boar Service

I have a young active purebred Berk boar, if anyone is interested. I'm not looking to sell him, but rather lend out his services to a needy sow. I'm sure we can work something out in the form of piglets or other trade. Located in MA, but close to RI border. Contact Chris at 774.535.1800 or Claverdiere1800@me.com.
Posted: August 20, 2012

Red Wiggler Composting Worms

Red wiggler composting worms to help manage farm manure. The result is a high nutrient soil enhancer for gardens, no manure odor and fly reduction. \$22/lb; over 10lbs \$17/lb. Grass-Fed Rabbits also available. Contact Lois at mannafarm@cox.net or 401-364-9673.
Posted: August 10, 2012

Straw Square Bales

Rye/vetch straw from certified fields \$5 picked up; delivery available (GPS mileage charge; 15 bales/pallet. Mastercard and Visa accepted. Volume discounts. Contact 401.683.1510 or chasefarms@verizon.net.
Posted: August 10, 2012

Product Tip

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Editors: Chris Ulrich
Jane Christopher
vgeese@verizon.net

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 through 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. 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 2012

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RIRLA Sponsorship and Advertising Information

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Cost: \$250/issue

Ad size: Full page plus special acknowledgement

Distribution: Over 225 RI, MA and CT farms and farm related businesses

Published: Quarterly - January, April, July, October

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(Dimensions: width x height)

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Cost: One time rate: \$25
4X rate: \$85 (4 issues)

1/4 page ad – 3-1/2" x 4-3/4"

Cost: One time rate: \$50
4X rate: \$175 (4 issues)

1/2 page ad – 7-1/2" x 5"

Cost: One time rate: \$75
4X rate: \$250 (4 issues)

Classifieds: 25¢/word