

A LOCAL, FAMILY-OWNED FARM



EAGLE CREST FARM

"Taste and see that the Lord is good"



YOUR LOCAL FARMERS

BEN, KELLY, CLAIRE, CALEB, GRANT,
ELISE, QUINN, AND BABY

Working alongside our sons and daughters to provide healthy, locally-grown food for our family, friends, and community

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Fresh from the Farm

Fresh Eggs



\$3.50 per dozen

Our egg layers are truly free-ranged, meaning they have full access to our entire farm to forage. Their diet is supplemented with a GMO-free grain.

Pastured Chicken

\$4 per pound

All of our chickens are antibiotic-free, hormone-free, steroid-free, and GMO-free. They were raised on fresh pasture with full access to free range our pastures to get plenty of sunshine and exercise.

Homemade Breads

Ezekiel - \$9.50

Wheat - \$7

Banana - \$7

Raisin - \$6

Pumpkin - \$6

Dinner Rolls - \$6



Our breads are made with freshly-milled flour, which packs in 40 essential nutrients. We also use honey, our fresh eggs, and extra-virgin olive oil.

Visit us at:

www.eaglecrestfarmva.com

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What's Happening on the Farm?

Egg-celent Eggs

Our egg layers have stayed warm throughout the winter in their coops at night and while foraging in the woods and fields in-between snow storms. They are eagerly awaiting the spring grasses, worms, and bugs. We have around 120 layers of various breeds right now, including Rhode Island Reds, Barred Rocks, Black Australorpes, Silver-laced Wyandottes, Easter Eggers, and others.

We'll begin raising a new batch of 150 layers starting in April. They will start laying in September. At that point, we'll sell our current flock to other farmers who are looking for healthy layers. This allows us to keep a steady supply of eggs for our customers. The eggs range from medium-large, and all of them have a dark, rich yolk.

Chief, our livestock guard dog, is doing a good job of protecting the free-ranging chickens from the many foxes and hawks that surround us.



Both the meat chickens and the egg layers love to forage in the grasses of the pastures. We give them free range of the farm so they can enjoy the clover and grass throughout the pasture. They enjoy scratching for worms and bugs, and enjoying both the sunshine and the shade throughout the day.



Happy Chickens

With spring weather approaching, our chickens are looking forward to the green pastures. Our first batch of meat chickens will be arriving in April. We plan to raise 400 meat chickens this year and 60 turkeys. It's always nice to see the chickens out in the pasture enjoying the green grasses. We have plans for more efficient watering and feeding systems to minimize our time in the pastures with the chickens this year. We're looking forward to the start of our farming season since each year we learn more and more about how to be better farmers.

Bummed about Bees

We have been keeping bees for five years. We have been battling a frustrating habit of our strong, healthy hives all absconding (the entire hive leaves without warning, unlike a swarm) in the fall. This means that we have to start over by buying packages of bees each spring, and the late start this causes results in the inability to harvest honey that year. We have talked to many, many bee keepers and veterans and no one can understand why this is happening. We have invested a lot of money and time into keeping bees, and we just can't afford to invest any more money without some assurance that this pattern won't continue. We're hoping researchers can discover what keeps happening to the bees. In the meantime, we are hanging up our bee veils for awhile and will not be keeping bees for at least this year and possibly longer.



Our newest baby boy (sixth child, fourth son) is due in April. We are looking forward to this special blessing. Please pray for our baby and the delivery and recovery.





Healthy Pastures and Why They Matter



You are what you eat, eats!

That is why we take great care and effort to focus not only on the health of our animals, but also on the health and quality of our pastures. David Kirby from the Huffington Post wrote the following: *“As more animals are raised by the thousands and packed into concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), their natural diets of roots and grasses, grubs and bugs has been replaced by a standard factory farm fare of grains, soybeans, King Corn and a sundry array of advanced pharmaceutical products. But sound science has emerged to demonstrate that eating meat, milk and eggs from grass-fed and pastured animals will provide your body with more health-enhancing, disease fighting materials than industrial-grade CAFO-raised protein.”*



What makes a healthy pasture?

A healthy pasture is one that is diverse in native plants and grasses, that is high in nutrient content, and has excellent soil quality with plenty of earthworms. The color is dark and rich, and the foliage is dense. Diversity of plant species is important in providing healthy, nutrient-rich forage for the animals.



How do we maintain the health and quality of our pastures?

Pasture-raised is different than just free-ranging. Free-ranging can mean that animals have continued access to one outdoor area of a set size. However, pastured animals are moved one to two times a day to new pasture and forage areas. This provides the animals with access to the diversity of foliage necessary for a complete diet. It also allows the soil and pasture to recover from the grazing of the animal. And it prevents the nitrogen-rich feces from burning and destroying the grass over time.

On our farm, we have twelve columns that we rotate our meat chickens on throughout the year. We move the shelter twice a day (once in the morning and once in the evening) along the column. It takes one week for the shelter to reach from one end of the column to the other. By moving the shelter twice daily, the grass that was smashed down during the night or during the hot parts of the day when the chickens sought shade can recover from the concentrated use. It also allows the feces to be more spread out, instead of concentrated in one area for a day or even longer. This maintains a lighter use of the grass, which maintains a healthier pasture.

Also, by having twelve columns to rotate the chickens on means that a column of pasture is only used once every three months. This gives the pasture ample time to regrow a dense diversity of rich foliage between use, which is healthier for the pasture and healthier for the chickens.



What are the benefits to eating meat and eggs raised on healthy pastures?

“When chickens are housed indoors and deprived of greens, their meat and eggs also become artificially low in omega-3s. Eggs from pastured hens can contain as much as 10 times more omega-3s than eggs from factory hens.”(1)

Research has shown that the quality and health of the meat of pastured animals is much higher. You can taste and feel the difference when you eat meat that has been pastured on good, healthy pastures. It’s important to us to maintain healthy pastures and quality husbandry practices because it’s true, you are what you eat, eats!

(1) Lopez-Bote, C. J., R.Sanz Arias, A.I. Rey, A. Castano, B. Isabel, J. Thos (1998). "Effect of free-range feeding on omega-3 fatty acids and alpha-tocopherol content and oxidative stability of eggs." *Animal Feed Science and Technology* 72: 33-40.

FARM DEVOTIONAL: THE INGALLS FAMILY

The children and I are re-reading the “Little House on the Prairie” series. There is so much we can learn from the Ingalls family and their homesteading, pioneer efforts. I’m especially interested in Ma, Caroline Ingalls. She is a wonderful role model for women. Here are a few lessons I’ve learned from Caroline Ingalls:

- She had a gentle, meek attitude and tone.
- She stayed calm amidst trials, storms, danger, and the unknowns of pioneering.
- She chose to always look on the positive side and stay cheerful for her children during scary and grim circumstances.
- She was a very hard, diligent worker who never complained, but found joy in the work she was called to do.
- She faithfully schooled her children and taught them character and how to be respectful ladies.
- She had the gift of hospitality.
- She faithfully encouraged and submitted to her husband, trusting his leadership and guidance and always deferring to him and then following him without complaint or criticism.

I want to elaborate on that last lesson. I believe her family was successful and able to survive largely due to the respect and trust Ma showed Pa. She gave him the confidence and the authority to lead his family, and because of that he was a strong and faithful leader. She did not undermine his authority or criticize him. She did not complain about the choices he made. Instead, she chose to bloom where she was planted (and replanted and replanted) and always encouraged Pa and showed him respect. I feel a little like Caroline Ingalls. I wasn’t expecting to be a “pioneering”, homesteading wife raising chickens and turkeys, sewing clothes, making bread, and rearing a houseful of children. However, I’m following Ben’s lead to where God is leading him, and this is where we’re at. I wish I were as encouraging and uncomplaining as Caroline Ingalls, but I’m learning. And when I do faithfully submit with confidence, then Ben is able to strongly lead, and we can all see the blessings that flow from this dynamic. There are many lessons to be learned from the Ingalls family, and though the lessons are close to 150 years old, their truths are still powerful in our lives today if we will humbly put them into practice.

Claire’s Corner

Written by Claire, age 10

Farm Favorites

I truly enjoy life on the farm. I like all the things we do, but I have some favorites. One of my favorites is feeding the chickens. I like to see how eagerly they all come running when I call them. As I reach for their food, they impatiently jump onto my back. Then, when I scatter the food, they all run for it at once.

Also, I like the memories, such as the time when we were planting strawberries. A storm was coming and we were only half way done. Grant and I had the best time ever racing back and forth with bucketfuls of dirt from the wheelbarrow.

Another memory is picking berries. Sometimes we would pick blackberries and blueberries with dad in the garden in the morning. While at other times we would pick wild raspberries with mom in the woods in the afternoons.

But wherever I am, and whatever I’m doing, I need to thank God for my farm, parents, siblings, and such wonderful memories.

“Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind.”

~Ps. 26:2

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

~ Jeremiah 17:9

Why do we tend to naturally resist someone looking over our shoulder to check on the quality of our work, be it a supervisor at work, a tax auditor at the IRS, or even a parent checking on a child’s work? Why do we tend to justify our own actions even when we know they are wrong? We often overlook our own sins by comparing ourselves to those who offended us, and we are often completely unaware of our own sins. The bible says that our hearts deceive us into thinking more highly of ourselves than we really are (Jer. 17:9)

When was the last time that you were angry with your neighbor? Did you justify that anger and consider it to be ‘righteous anger’ because of what the other person did? We know that it is wrong to physically murder someone, and most people would say that they have never murdered someone; however, Jesus said: “...anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.” Therefore, in God’s eyes, our anger is considered to be murder which breaks his perfect moral law which puts us in danger of the fire hell if we haven’t yet asked Christ to save us. Let me encourage you to humbly ask Jesus to examine your heart and mind every day through all the ups and downs and confess and repent of sin as he brings it to your awareness and ask for forgiveness from those you have sinned against.



CALEB'S CORNER: TERRIFIC TOMATOES

Written by Caleb, age 8

Tomatoes need to be kept away from bugs. Tomatoes need a lot of water. They need something to keep them standing. They also need to be covered up in cold weather. Tomato plants need to be kept away from chickens.

You might want to start with one tomato plant. First you dig a little hole and put the tomato plant in. Then you put the dirt back in and pack it lightly. Then water it. And when you are planting a tomato make sure you find a sunny place for it.

I like tomato plants because I can put tomatoes on my lunch! My favorite kind are "Joe Bly" tomatoes, that a 98 year old man from here, named Joe Bly, grew in his yard.



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