

Lincoln County Farm Bureau Rotational Grazing Beef Farm Tour a success

About 30 participants enjoyed a farm tour on June 5, with two area beef farmers. The tour was sponsored by the Lincoln County Farm Bureau and focused on grass-fed, rotational grazing of cattle.

Grass is the natural food of cattle. While grass-fed beef takes longer to mature to market weight, the beef produced is lower in fat, high in antioxidants, and tastes great! And the benefits of buying local, getting to know who produces your food and who processes your meat, gives buyers confidence in the quality and availability of their food supply.

The tour began at Tom and Linda Daigle's farm, Twin Creeks Cattle in the Town of Harrison. Lincoln County Owner Tom Daigle has been an advocate of grass-raised beef for years and has hosted many pasture walks for people who are interested in learning more about the process. His brother, Paul, who works for the Marathon County Land and Water Conservation Department, was also there to answer questions. Rep. Calvin Callahan also participated.

The participants learned about the environmental benefits of grass-fed, rotational grazed beef. The animals rotate between pastures, changing each day to a new pasture, which allows the natural fertilizer to be evenly and slowly distributed throughout the pastures. Each pasture plot has time to recover, so the growth is richer and more diverse than in a conventional large pasture situation. Perennial grass means the ground is not plowed up each year, preserving soil and allowing the pasture to soak up water that otherwise would run off into adjacent surface waters. This helps prevent flooding and slows nutrient loss to the groundwater and surface water. Pasture grasses use less commercial fertilizer, less insecticides, and less weed control chemicals than the grain fed to today's mass produced beef.

Another benefit to using grass-fed local beef is the confidence having a freezer full of meat brings to your family. Tour Coordinator, Laurie Groskopf, explained that during the pandemic, when meat got scarce and prices were unstable, having plenty of meat in the house freezer provided the serenity that there would be no shortages in the family diet.

The cattle themselves are also raised in a healthier environment than the traditional feed-lot where market cattle are "finished" by being fed grain. Pasture-raised beef live their lives outside, which is natural,



At the Conlan Farm, tour participants enjoyed getting close to the cattle, pastured in a shady area on a hot day.

Submitted photo.

and have their natural herd to rely on for company. Groskopf remembered, "I visited the second farm (Jerry and Stephanie Conlan's farm in the Town of King, Lincoln County) during calving. What an exciting thing to witness, and to my surprise, Stephanie explained that the cow approaching the new mom's calf was last year's calf. A multi-generational bovine experience! That was an eye opener."

"Learning about where your food comes from and experiencing a real farm is not something many people have a chance to experience these days. We hope to make farm tours available in Lincoln County and surrounding counties each year, and surely do appreciate the Daigle and Conlan families giving up a day to help others learn about the benefits of grass-fed, rotational grazed beef," Groskopf said.