
Upcoming Events and Workshops

2008 County Fairs and 4H Show Dates

ERI 4-H Fair

July 18 and 19
Glen Farm, Portsmouth, RI

Foster Old Home Days

July 25, 26, 27
Foster Fairgrounds,
Foster, RI
[www.uri.edu/coopext/4H/
fosterfair.html](http://www.uri.edu/coopext/4H/fosterfair.html)

Washington County Fair

August 13-17
Washington County Fairgrounds,
Richmond, RI
www.washingtoncountyfair.com

Brooklyn Fair

August 21-24
Brooklyn Fairgrounds,
Brooklyn, CT
www.brooklynfair.com

Woodstock Fair

August 29 – Sept. 1
Woodstock Fairgrounds,
Woodstock, CT
www.woodstockfair.com

The Big E

Eastern States Exposition
September 12-28
Springfield, MA
www.thebige.com

2008 Grazing Workshop Series

Beginning & experienced graziers
who would like to learn about
the tools and resources needed to
develop grazing systems and how to
improve animal growth or production
through better pasture management
are invited to attend a Grazing School
to be held as part of the Northeast
Organic Farming Association (NOFA)
summer conference on Saturday,
August 9th.

Register online at:

[www.nofamass.org/conferences/
s2008/index.php](http://www.nofamass.org/conferences/s2008/index.php)

Calendar

Steering Committee Meeting

Monday July 28, 7:00 p.m.
Gregg's Restaurant, North Kingstown

A Final Note

RIRLA is planning to create a member directory, which we hope to produce before the end of the year. The directory is intended for use as a resource, not only listing contact information but also the specific breeds of livestock each member raises. This listing may assist those members raising the same breeds who are looking to buy/sell/trade breeding stock, as well as sharing information. If you **DO NOT** want your contact information listed in this directory, or wish to limit the information listed, please contact Jane Christopher at: vgeese@verizon.net.

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





NEWS

Summer 2008

Volume 2 Issue 2

Greetings To All Rhode Island Farmers

from Bill Coulter, President, RIRLA

I hope everyone had a good spring, and all of your first cut is in. Our steering committee has been very busy in developing a processing relationship with Johnston Beef and Veal, as well as with Westerly Packing. We have also hired Kim Ziegelmayr as our Executive Director. The position of executive director will be to coordinate processing, recruit membership, aid in marketing and to keep records of our activity related to processing. We will be able to forecast in the future what the busy time of year will be as well as the slack times. Kim will have a segment in the newsletter keeping all of us updated as to the growth of our association.

I hope everyone will have a chance to meet her and welcome her aboard. In the spring 2008 newsletter, our past president, Don Minto, spoke about the trials and tribulations of processing our product out of state, and the expenses associated with it. He also speculated that we would soon be processing locally. Well, we have good news for all. During the months of April, May and June, we have started the process of using these facilities, and with great results! There have been a few bumps in the road; however, we are smoothing them out, and I will talk more about this in the processing update.

Since the spring meeting, our membership has grown significantly. The first three years of this association, we would add a few members every so often. In the last few months, our association has grown to more than 45 farms, and applications keep coming in. We are optimistic that we are on the right path, and that everyone can benefit from the accomplishments that we have made. I would also like to say this is a membership organization, and if any members would like to volunteer for any sub-committees, please call a member of the executive board or call me. The numbers will be in this newsletter.

Processing Update: Impressive Results and Yields

The first three months of activity resulted with ten farms sending forty-three head of livestock to be processed. The breakdown is as follows: 15 beef; 20 hogs; and 8 lambs. So far, everyone has been happy with the results. Johnston Beef and Veal has been very accommodating and willing to assist us in whatever way they can in order to make this process benefit both us as farmers, and them as our initial processor. Also, Westerly Packing has made every effort to give us a high percentage of yield per carcass. They have also been very helpful in making sure that we get a well packaged product. Many of our members have reported that their cutability has been between 70 and 80 percent.

We have established an identification system so each farm is designated their own identification number. This two digit identification number precedes a two digit animal number (i.e. farm number 99 sends animal number 12 to be processed. The ear tag number would then read "9912").

We purchased a four digit rubber stamp, and Johnston Beef and Veal stamps the carcass according to the identification number on the ear tag or other marking system. When the product reaches Westerly Packing, they read the number stamped on the carcass to identify which farm it belongs to. From that they match the cut sheet to the carcass. Also, the two digit prefix

is how your farm is programmed into our labeling scale for your labels. We developed this system so there would be no confusion dealing with the two locations for processing. So far, this system has been very successful.

The cost for processing is as follows:
Beef - \$60 kill fee; \$25 scheduling fee; \$.93/lb cryovac packaging fee.

Hogs - \$45 kill fee; \$15 scheduling fee; \$.79/lb cryovac packaging fee.

Lamb/Goat - \$30 kill fee; \$5 scheduling fee; \$75 flat fee for cryovac packaging.

There is currently a \$150 trucking fee from Johnston Beef and Veal to Westerly Packing. There are openings for processing for the remainder of the year.

Please contact Kim Ziegelmayr at (401) 338-0722 for the next available processing date.

A Message from the New Director of RIRLA, Kim Ziegelmayr



Greetings RI Raised Livestock Association members!

My name is Kim Ziegelmayr. In May this year the Search Committee chose me to be the new director of RIRLA. I would like to thank the Search Committee for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I am very excited to be on board with such a great organization. Though I have only been around a short while it is easy to see and appreciate all the hard work done by so many devoted people. Congratulations on all you have accomplished, you are an impressive group!

I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself if I may – people are always curious about the new person! Previous

to joining RIRLA, I worked as a program manager for the National Network of Forest Practitioners, a non-profit member association working on sustainable forestry and rural development issues. I have been the owner of several small businesses and have spent most of my working life in the construction, transportation and restaurant industries (translation: I have spent a lot of time working as a house painter, truck driver and waitress). I received my bachelor's degree in anthropology in 1995 and my masters in environmental management in 2001. Last but definitely not least - I have two children, Whelan (7) and Ray (3). My kids have not only given me the most challenging and rewarding job I have ever had but have done more to teach me about what is really important in life than all my previous experiences combined.

So, now that you know a little bit about me, I am looking forward to learning more about all of you! And just as importantly, learning from you. As you can see, I have no background in farming, but I am very, very excited to learn more about RI farmers and the important work all of you do, as farmers and as members of RIRLA. I look forward to working with all of you and am honored to be part of the group helping to move the Association forward. RIRLA

has, can and will benefit its members, economically, with technical assistance and through networking. But RIRLA will also benefit our wonderful little state, its people, its heritage and its future.

The mission of RIRLA - promoting and preserving Rhode Island's agricultural lands and lifestyle, and our rural economy - is critical work that preserves the past, sustaining the things we value. At the same time, building a viable processing infrastructure and providing for efficient and sustainable production, processing and marketing of quality, value added, RI produced meats moves the Association, and RI's rural lands and communities, towards a more sustainable and secure future.

Even though I am very new, I can see that the Association has come a long way in the last two and a half years. That so much has been accomplished by volunteers who generally work a full-time job and then farm on top of that is pretty amazing! I am very pleased to now be a part of this effort, and I promise I will do the best job I can for all of you. Again, I congratulate you on all your success and look forward to achieving still more in the future. Thanks for letting me come along for the ride!

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Resource Spotlight: NESARE Farmer Grants

For over thirty years, USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program has been a critical resource for agricultural innovators across the nation. The Northeast SARE program, or NESARE, has several grant programs designed for farmers, researchers and educators.

The goal of NESARE's Farmer Grant Program is to develop, refine and demonstrate new sustainable techniques and to explore innovative ideas developed by farmers across the region. To apply, you must be a farmer in the Northeast SARE region, which includes Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

To be eligible for a farmer grant you need not be farming full time, but your operation should have an established crop or animal product that you sell on a regular basis. Non-profit farms may apply, but the primary activity of the farm must be to produce and sell food

under the kinds of economic constraints that affect commercial growers. Many community-supported farms qualify, but farms where the primary mission is educational normally do not.

The deadline for 2008 Farmer Grant applications is past, but it is not too late to begin planning for the 2009 application. A useful guide to developing a Farmer Grant application, with examples and explanations of what makes a strong proposal, is NESARE's 44-page booklet: *How to Write a SARE Farmer Grant Application*.

It can be ordered by contacting the NESARE office at 802-656-0471 or nesare@uvm.edu. It is also available online at www.uvm.edu/nesare/07Farmerguide.pdf.

To learn more about past Farmer projects, you may view the national project database. This database allows you to sort by grant type, region, interest area and a variety of other criteria. The national database and much more is available at www.uvm.edu/nesare.

265 acre seaside farm in Jamestown. It was preserved in 1979 when Tom Carr Watson left his family farm (Circa 1789) to Historic New England as a museum that preserves the culture, artifacts and buildings of New England. Don and Heather became farm managers in 1980 and began transitioning their herd of commercial Simmental/ Angus cows over to Red Devons in 2001.

There will be a lot to learn about nutrition, minerals and pasture as well as breeding. A Locavore's Feast, judging contest and opportunities to pick our guest experts' brains will make for a fine time. For more information contact Don Minto at 423-0005 or watsonfarm1796@yahoo.com.



Annual Meeting for the North American Devon Association October 17-19

Set aside this Fall weekend now to enjoy cattle and the South County coastal area.

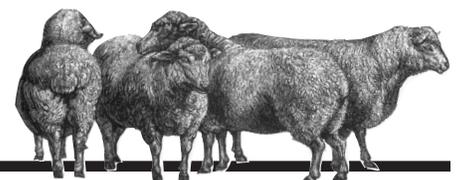
"Gourmet Beef on Grass: How to Make Money-Now!" is the conference theme for the Annual Meeting for the North American Devon Association. It will take place in Rhode Island this year on October 17-19.

The weekend begins Friday afternoon at the Holiday Inn at the Towers at 5pm with the annual meeting followed by the opening banquet. Will Winter and Abe Collins (Carbon Farmers of

America) along with Gearald Fry will be guest speakers at the conference. Saturday's program will be devoted to the kinds of cows and bulls you should choose and the pasture they should be raised on. The full afternoon will feature practical advice on how to market your animals...or your meat. In the evening there will be a BBQ and Select Sale of Devons held at the Washington County Fairgrounds. Sunday, the event will move to Watson Farm and enjoy the hospitality of Don and Heather Minto at the Historic Watson Farm. The Watson Farm is a

Sheepdog Clinic

Jane Christopher and Chris Ulrich are hosting a sheepdog training clinic in Foster, RI in September. The clinic is for people with herding dogs who are interested in assessing their dog's interest and learning the basics or expanding on their dog's current level of training. Clinic date is 9/21. Carol Champion, a well-known breeder & trainer of Border Collies in Hampton, CT, will conduct the clinic. Cost is \$75 per person with one dog for the day; \$35 to audit. If interested, call Jane Christopher at 401-447-9320, or email vgeese@verizon.net.



RIRLA, RI Beef & Veal and Westerly Packing: A Working Collaboration

by Kim Zeigelmayer

As mentioned in our President's Message, the steering committee of RIRLA has been working diligently to develop a local processing infrastructure to meet the needs of our producing members.

We are pleased and proud to report that we have established a relationship with two very competent, family-run Rhode Island companies who have agreed to work in tandem to provide a sound system of production for our organization. Here's a closer look:

simple, a stark contrast to the important work done within. This USDA certified facility is destined to play a critical role in the growth and future of the RI Raised Livestock Association, a vital piece of the expanding network.

When you walk in the door the smell of the slaughter is inescapable, yet not overpowering, as the place is unquestionably clean. A left takes you to the boning area, a large hallway where the meat is de-boned and shipped out. On the right side of the hallway a thick door takes

Westerly Packing. Joel opens another door. "We have a retail store that we open on Saturdays. Saturdays are busy. Though we don't use it much it is nice to have."

Joel reminisced about the old days when Johnston Beef used to do 60-70 animals a day. Now it's only about 60-70 per week. Joel estimates that doing business with RIRLA members has added 2-3% to his business to date, and they are ready and willing to take in more animals. "It can be done," says Mike, "you just have to work more hours."

When asked about how he felt about working with RIRLA, Joel responded, "I like it, it is good business for us. I wish you could give us more, 10-20 animals per week would be great! RIRLA farmers have been very nice, nothing but polite." What about special requests? "Sure, we can get you back the hearts, tongues, whatever. You just have to let me know. Normally, I sell them to Brown and URI for academic research."

Mike and Joel plan on continuing the business model that Sonny developed for RI Beef & Veal, Inc. many years ago: keeping the business catering to local needs. "I love the job and I love the life I live," says Mike. "My father taught me the business; a lot of people can't say that. The livelihood has been real good to me, real good."



Joel and Mike Quattrucci in the hanging room at RI Beef & Veal

RI Beef & Veal

Mike Quattrucci remembers coming to RI Beef & Veal, known to members of RI Raised Livestock Association as "Johnston Beef," when he was merely 6 or 7 years old. Mike and his nephew Joel took over the business when Sonny Quattrucci, Mike's father, passed away in April of this year. The business at 60 Armento Street in Johnston has been operating for nearly a century, changing hands once before in 1986. The Quattrucci's long history in the Johnston beef industry continues to this day.

From the low, white exterior, the RI Beef & Veal building appears plain and

you into the kill room, where the animal is slaughtered, skinned, and gutted in under 10 minutes. A USDA inspector, on-site 40 hours per week, makes sure the facility conforms to its HAACP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) plan, and oversees conformance to other federal health and safety standards. "We don't move without him," Joel stresses.

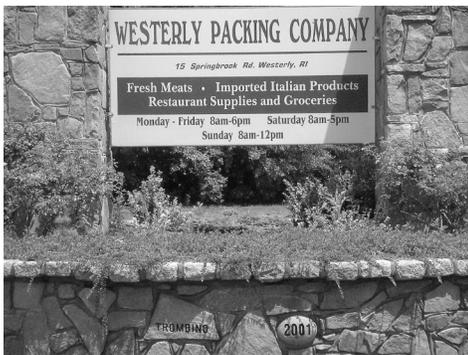
From the kill room, the carcasses are sprayed with lactic acid to kill any possible bacteria before they are moved to the holding box, which has a capacity of about 70 animals. There, RIRLA carcasses will hang until Thursday or Friday, when they are transported to



Joel handles their new relationship with Bruno Trombino at Westerly Packing, saying business has been going well. "I never worked with him before, so far it has been good. You know Bruno, he calls me any chance he gets. We get along great."

Westerly Packing

Westerly Packing, the other vital link in the network established by RIRLA, has been a family business for more than 80 years. In the 1920s, Rico Bruno started a slaughterhouse and meat store called "Bruno's Market" in a residential neighborhood in Westerly. When the slaughter business grew too large in the 1930s, it moved to its current location at 15 Springbrook Road. The slaughterhouse



Westerly Packing entrance.

portion of the business closed in 1975 leaving the packing business to carry on. Rico's granddaughter's husband, Medoro Trombino Sr., took over the business in 1978, and it was then that it became Westerly Packing. Bruno Trombino, Rico's great-grandson, helps run and manage the family business today.

Bruno is the primary contact for the Association and its members. Yet, when you visit Westerly Packing you are just as likely to run into his father or mother, Medoro and Palma Trombino, who own Westerly Packing; or Bruno's brother Medoro II, the head meat cutter, as well as one of several cousins employed as meat cutters, delivery and store staff. "We are all chiefs and no Indians here," Bruno laughs. "My dad is good to go talk to if you have an old recipe that you want to try. He'll be able to tell you how to do it. When the farmers come here and I see them talking to him you can see they share a lot in common. Back in Italy, almost everyone farmed. My father

remembers all that."

From the exterior, Westerly Packing is as unassuming as RI Beef & Veal, but it, too, is critically important to the success of RI Raised Livestock Association. The facility is USDA inspected, and licensed to process beef, pork, lamb, goat, and chicken. "We currently have a facility that can hang 15-20 animals, depending on the animals," Bruno explains. "We are looking forward to building a facility that can hold up to 50 animals. We are hoping to grow with RIRLA, hoping that I can help them grow and they can help me grow. I think it is a beautiful relationship. When I put on my addition I want to put in a display meat case that is devoted to RIRLA." Bruno says. "Putting on the new addition has a lot to do with RIRLA. When the addition is done I expect to employ more people, and I have plans to increase the size of the retail store."

"We're meat cutters, not butchers, meaning that you will get more steaks out of us than someone that has less experience and skill," Bruno says with pride. "I feel we can get their [yield] percentages higher than other places." Members back up Bruno's assertion: Bill Coulter was very happy with the return of 70% content from his cattle. Will Wright was also pleased with the increase in return, receiving 85%, as opposed to the 55-65% he's received from other facilities.

Working with Westerly Packing offers RIRLA members still more advantages. Known for their great Italian sausage recipe, Bruno has even offered to assist in getting members' personal recipes approved by the USDA.

With USDA certification, Westerly Packing must abide by very specific procedures, insuring minimal growth of the bacteria

e. coli. A further aid to members, Westerly Packing would hold some of the farmers' liability if, in a worst-case scenario, someone became sick from tainted meat.

In addition, the scale owned by RIRLA that Westerly Packing uses as it cryovacs and labels the meat is a huge benefit of RIRLA membership. In Bruno's opinion the decision by RIRLA to buy the scale was "one of the best moves that (the Association) made. Labels push everyone to join RIRLA, since I can't use the scale on anyone else's meat." There will soon be a pile of membership forms and brochures at Westerly Packing for those who are interested in joining.

Bruno also feels the new relationship with Joel at Johnston Beef is going well. He says, "It's been fine. I haven't worked with them before but I suspect my grandfather may have worked with his grandfather. Joel and I have a rapport with the inspectors. When I talk to Joel, we kind of grew up the same, and the farmers too, we're all the same type of people, we work hard, no one grew up with a silver spoon in their mouth."

"We've been doing this (with RIRLA) for 3-4 months," Bruno continues. "So far my expectations have been met. It is nice to revisit this trade; we've gone back to hanging beef. If my grandfather was alive he'd be in heaven."



The Westerly Packing cutters in the hanging room.



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Breed Notes

Devon Cattle History

(reprinted with permission from the American Devon Cattle Association)

Devon cattle may not have come over on the Mayflower, but it wasn't much later. They have been at the heart of the American agricultural scene since Pilgrim times. In fact, Devon arrived in North America in 1623 on the vessel Charity at Plymouth Colony.

Back then, the Devon was favored for its hardy foraging ability in uncertain grass conditions; their rich milking ability favored the sustenance of both calf and the pioneer family, and their docility and strength adapted them for use as oxen. The Devon was the all-around cow, providing milk, meat and muscle for the new nation.

But the history of the Devon goes back far before Colonial times. Devon are named for the county in southwest England where records indicate red cattle were present as early as 200 B.C, grazing the rolling fields of this outpost of the Roman Empire.

Further back, the theory is that Devon originated in northern Africa and were introduced to the Romans by the Phoenicians. This may explain the remarkable ability of the Devon to adapt to both hot climates and the cold and damp of English winters.

Behind the present-day Devon lies a story of intelligent breeding and tremendous foresight stretching back almost three centuries. Devon in the 18th century were bred for smallness of bone. Breeders wanted them wide between the hips and thick through the heart. Most Devon men were taught a rhyme as boys about the Devon cow:

*Broad in her ribs and long in her rump;
straight flat back with never a hump.
Fine in her bone and silky of skin,
she's a grazier without and a butcher within.*

In the United States, the first Devon herd book was begun in 1855 by Horace Sessions in Massachusetts with the last volume appearing in 1879. Two years later James Buckingham of Zanesville,

Ohio began publishing the American Devon Record. That Devon registry has remained intact for 125 years!

Ironically, the very success of the Devon was the reason for its decline. Having been associated with its outstanding performance under tough conditions, it was assumed it could not compete with pampered animals that were raised on a steady diet of grain. Industrial agriculture particularly wanted a hot animal for finishing in the feedlot.

But recent years have seen a re-discovery of the Devon. The grain shortages after World War II saw a rise in the popularity of grass finishing. More recently the trend was accelerated with diseases like Mad Cow and FMD.

Devon breeders are at record numbers worldwide, and once again Devon has become the all-American cow because of its ability to perform and finish on grass, its superior fertility and maternal traits, and most of all its ability to deliver high quality grass-finished organic beef to the consumers' table.

**Rhode Island Raised
Livestock Association
gratefully acknowledges
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Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association

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Annual membership is \$30 per farm, and includes the newsletter. 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 2008

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Heather Minto, Secretary 423-0005
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423-0005

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