

Workshop Title:

“Ethical” Veal

Speaker:

Emily Shapiro

Executive Summary:

This workshop discussed Emily Shapiro’s farm and her production of rose veal. Rose veal is from slaughtered calves that were fed a mixture of grain and milk and that are given space to walk around. There is a small market for rose veal over white veal. White veal is produced by slaughtering calves that are forced to be anaemic and prevented from walking to produce a tender, white cut of meat.

Main Notes:

- ◆ Becaguimec Farm (“Beack-a-gui-mec” farm), Cloverdale NB; named after stream that runs through their property “where the salmon gather” in the stream
- ◆ Livestock and organic grain farmer
- ◆ Both have off farm full time jobs
- ◆ Works full time at SPADE
- ◆ 80 acres certified organic on their property
- ◆ Taking a while to get everything in the soil right because it hadn’t been farmed in about 10 years when they moved in. been there for 3 years now
- ◆ Livestock not certified organic- it is pasteurized right now
- ◆ Cloverdale near hartland- 15 min drive into the woods

Why veal?

- ◆ “Ethical” veal
- ◆ Slightly better animal health and comfort

What is rose veal?

- ◆ 2 main types of veal- white veal, milk fed veal
- ◆ White veal raised in confinement to reduce muscle gain; kept anemic to get the white colored meat; very lean and tender meat; butchered young: between 18–20 weeks
- ◆ Rose veal also called grain fed veal
- ◆ Very popular in French speaking parts of Canada
- ◆ Very few producers, not on store shelves
- ◆ More ethically raised; increase the quality of the short life for these animals
- ◆ Raised in big pen; social animals; lets them have socializing experience; better exercise
- ◆ Fed milk, grain and also forage
- ◆ Butchered after 5-8 months
- ◆ This veal falls into the standard rose veal standards
- ◆ We raise between 2-6 calves at a time
- ◆ Raised in large pen with other cattle with access to outside and pasture in summer
- ◆ Fed only milk from their dairy cows, free choice grains all day to eat whatever they want; also given forage to nibble on when they want to; makes them healthier animals; reduces their grain intake which is economic benefit
- ◆ Start out with a bucket each and go up to 1 and a half, then 2 buckets of milk

- ◆ Feed is a large expense
- ◆ They try to keep their herds closed; specific about where they buy their cows
- ◆ Calves tend to be born with eye issues
- ◆ Dairy farm truck wont pick up calves that have any kind of issues (injury, eye problems) which means someone can go along after that and usually buy those types of calves for a discounted price
- ◆ Spend an average of \$883 on each calf; sell them for above \$1200 depending on the weight of the grown calf so they still make some profit
- ◆ Added a small freezer in their local farmers market in Woodstock so that they can promote their veal to customers who might happen to see the meat in the freezer when they are looking for something else; its hard for customers to see the veal when it is in her freezer in her basement
- ◆ They need to get their meat out into the public in order to sell it better
- ◆ When they have a customer who is interested in their meat, they send them a pdf of all of the different types of cuts they can get and ask them to pick what cuts and how many of them they want
- ◆ They haven't come across many challenges in raising
- ◆ Have to consider when breeding that they don't produce all at once; babies or milk. They found that about 6 months apart works for most families
- ◆ They are raised very well; she takes them into her kitchen when they are calves if they were born in a snow bank for example to make sure it stays healthy
- ◆ Educating the customers is important

- ◆ Transportation is a challenge, they don't have a refrigerated truck to transport their meat from Cloverdale to places like Moncton; can't transport a frozen carcass in your trunk for 3 hours in the summer; just won't work
- ◆ Got their veal into the hall of local farm heroes at Crowne Plaza Fredericton- trying to push the local food trend- they started this because they had a chef who was doing his own processing with the whole animal- bones for broth etc
- ◆ Not selling as much meat as they would like to be
- ◆ Direct marketing- steady

Questions

- ◆ They do milking by vacuum pump- started out milking by hand which was much more difficult than doing by pump
- ◆ They have 11 pigs- just got 9 piglets on Saturday- they will be selling pork when they can
- ◆ They take the calves from the moms within the first day- separate them with a metal gate so they could still lick and moo to each other, but after a week the cow generally doesn't care anymore so they can separate the calf from the mom completely
- ◆ Animals who grow up with their moms know how to raise their own young; those who are taken away from their moms right away have no idea what to do if they have their own young; they have to be taught to be a mother because they will not be able to do it without being taught
- ◆ This year they had 50 chickens- they add every year based on the demand from the previous year; 12-14 weeks usually before butchering them

- ◆ Their customers preferred the meat kings over the Pasture free other type which took twice as long to raise- costs more because they still need to be fed all that time
- ◆ They sell turkeys but they don't sell as well because they are more expensive birds- they had about 40 turkeys this years
- ◆ They haven't had much issue with predators- they have a big electronet fence to keep them enclosed