

season, when nutritional content is at its peak.

Managed grazing is a “win-win-win” situation – for the environment, for the animals and for the people who depend on them for nutritious healthy food.

Ask your grocer or co-op manager about grass-fed meat, eggs and dairy products. Get to know the farmers in your area who utilize managed grazing, make a visit to a grass-based farm and see for yourself how grass-based food is produced. Find more resources and search for a managed grazing farm near you at www.grassworks.org



GrassWorks Inc.

The Voice of Grass-based Agriculture

Better Farming, Better Food

How Grass Farmers Make High Quality Food Using Managed Grazing



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- i See, for example, Porter, W. P. et al. Endocrine, Immune, and Behavioral Effects of aldicarb (carbamate), atrazine (triazine) and nitrate (fertilizer) Mixtures at Groundwater Concentrations.” *Toxicology and Industrial Health* (1999) 15:133-150.
- ii Center for Disease Control. 2005 “National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals” (www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/); see also Environmental Working Group website (www.ewg.org) and the Environmental Protection Agency website (www.epa.gov/).

GrassWorks is a membership organization that provides leadership and education to farmers and consumers for the advancement of managed grass-based agriculture to benefit present and future generations.

For more information: www.grassworks.org

As Michael Pollan notes in his best-selling book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, deciding “what’s for dinner” has become a complicated task. It seems that, as consumers, we are continually bombarded with new information about what we should and should not eat. One day that sirloin steak may be perfectly good for you—the next, a study comes out linking it to cancer or heart disease or obesity. Meanwhile, food processors attempt to capitalize on the latest science by claiming to have “0 trans-fat” or by adding “antioxidants” and “Omega-3s” to processed foods. A vast, complex and highly profitable food industry has come between us and our basic need for good food.

There is a way to farm that produces healthy and delicious food the old-fashioned way. A new generation of family farmers is making highly nutritious, great-tasting food by raising animals on pasture. When you eat grass-fed food, you can see the bright colors and taste the difference that is indicative of great, nutrient-dense food. Let your own senses be the arbiter of what is likely the healthiest.

Taking Organic to the Next Level

In recent years, concerns about chemicals used in agricultural production have prompted more and more Americans to seek alternatives. One increasingly popular alternative is USDA certified organic. The “organic” label assures consumers that what they are buying is free from pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Grass-based production focuses on the **nutritional benefits** of raising animals on pasture. Grass-fed meat, eggs and dairy products contain higher levels of important Omega 3 fatty acids, better fat ratios, more essential vitamins (A, E, C, K and D) and more beta-carotene, lutein and other antioxidants.

Many livestock farmers use a farming method called **Managed Grazing** in order to restore food to its natural nutrient-dense state.

In managed grazing, cattle, poultry, sheep, goats, pigs and/or bison graze through paddocks of high-quality legumes and grasses in cycles of harvest, then rest for re-growth. Diverse pasture plants draw minerals from the soil and capture energy from the sun to create a complex of carbohydrates, vitamins, fatty acids, caroteneids and other essential components that we have only begun to understand. Ruminants, like dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats and bison, eat the nutritious plants that their unique digestive systems were designed to process. Hogs and poultry benefit from seeds, worms and insects

as well as fresh greens in the pasture. The nutritional goodness created by forage plants, in turn, becomes the flesh of the pig, the milk of the cow or the egg of the chicken. Animal manure returns organic matter back to the soil, which provides nutrients for the plants.... It is a timeless, natural cycle that has supported life on this planet from the beginning. Managed Graziers merely facilitate the transformation of sunlight into food.

Managed Graziers Don't Require Potentially Harmful Inputs

Consumers are concerned about the use of herbicides, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics and GMOs in food production. At the top of the food chain, we are especially vulnerable to the cumulative effect of environmental toxins.ⁱ According to the Center for Disease Control, food is a primary pathway for toxins to enter our bodies. There is mounting scientific evidence that links chemicals in food to obesity, cancer, cognitive dysfunction (e.g. developmental delay, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and autism), fertility problems, allergies and auto-immune disorders.ⁱⁱ These chemical inputs can also damage soil life. Managed grazing works with biological processes to build soil fertility and ensure that animals are healthy and productive. While some pastures do occasionally receive non-organic nitrogen fertilizers, managed grazing requires minimal and targeted intervention that has little negative environmental impacts.

Although Managed Graziers in the Midwest must feed hay or silage during winter months, meat animals are usually harvested after the growing

