

FARM BUREAU® Connection

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gratitude for the Food and Farmer

By Kevin Krentz, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President



It's the time of year where it is more common to allocate time for a nice meal with family and friends. Whether it's the common Thanksgiving dinner, holiday gatherings or a Christmas meal tradition, many of us make time for good food with our favorite people.

Being a farmer, I've always thought I had an interesting perspective when looking at a table of food. Now, as the leader of a general farm organization, it's even more intriguing because I have connections to just about every type of food making Thanksgiving feel like a storybook.

I don't take for granted that I am not only lucky enough to have food on my table, but I know almost all the stories behind the ingredients and plates on the table.

The main dish of turkey, ham or beef roast might have come from a grocery store, or a farm nearby. Regardless of where you buy your food from, know there was a lot of work, thought and regulations behind it. I think it's a win-win when we can support the farmers within our state but know there are farmers all over the country providing safe and nutritious products for us to enjoy.

The potatoes might have come from Wisconsin's central sands region in the middle of the state. Our state ranks third in the nation in potato production. I have been able to hear from potato farmers themselves just how far they have come in using technology to assist with nearly every aspect of their crop from planting to harvesting to storage.

Other vegetables like corn, carrots and snap beans might have come from our state as well. Wisconsin is one of the top states in the

production of the major processing vegetables. I'll never forget when one farmer shared with me that some of the vegetables in cans were processed within hours of being harvested.

Whether it's a side of cranberries or pumpkin pie, there are many fruit farmers in Wisconsin. In fact, next year's Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest is surrounding that very topic. I've been to apple and cherry orchards, pumpkin patches and cranberry bogs and I never grow tired of taste testing these delicious crops. It's important to note that Wisconsin is #1 in cranberry production and tart cherry production too.

I like to have a nice tall glass of milk with hearty meals and never turn down a scoop of ice cream or whipped cream on my pie. I REALLY know the story behind dairy products being a dairy farmer myself. From cow to case in less than 36 hours, you can't find a more nutritious food product. Many don't realize that milk is never touched by human hands and that the dairy industry itself contributes \$45.6 billion to Wisconsin's economy every year.

I hope as we all gather around the table this year, we can challenge ourselves to take a moment to recognize just how blessed we are.

We have access to plenty of food options and choices.

We have a diverse agricultural economy that gives us plenty of local products to hit our main food groups.

We have amazing farmers throughout the state working hard to feed our communities. Farming isn't always easy, and it plays a vital role in each of our lives. As we move into the season of giving thanks, we have plenty to be thankful for and farmers are one of them! They appreciate you supporting them by being a member.

Enjoy this season of good food, family and friends.

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RIEMER FAMILY FINDS THEIR NICHE with SHEEP

By Amy Eckelberg



Located within 20 miles of downtown Milwaukee, you'd never know the serenity of the Riemer family's farm unless you pull in the driveway.

The first view you get is the historic barn which was relocated in the 1920s piece by piece from Milwaukee using horses and wagons. The barn used to hold the family's herd of Guernseys until 1996 when the herd was dispersed.

The farm, owned by several generations of the Riemer family back in 1914, was originally about 150 acres but was subdivided when the dairy cows vacated. Left with eight acres and a desire to have their children involved in agriculture, Kevin and his wife, Lorrie, decided to try raising sheep.

The plan worked and the family has been raising their flock since 2008 when they bought their first two ewes.

"Sheep were a way that we could keep our family connected to agriculture and to the farm," explained Lorrie.

They have learned a lot along the way regarding feeding and genetics but the goal of staying connected to agriculture has remained the focus.

Kevin shared, "I say this often and the kids roll their eyes, but I didn't get sheep with the intention of raising champion sheep, I got them with the intent to raise champion kids."

IT'S SHOWTIME

Kevin and Lorrie have five children: Sarah, Josh, Tim, Paul and Hannah. Each family member has a responsibility and role with the flock.

Like many youth exhibitors across the state, the Riemer family enjoys showing their animals at competitions not only in Wisconsin but across the Midwest. The family has shown at their local county and state fair, but also at shows in Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kentucky and Kansas.

When asked about what their favorite show was, they all agreed that the Wisconsin State Fair was the most competitive and exciting.

All the kids have shown sheep at one point with Hannah still

showing as a youth exhibitor. The three boys are the most involved and do the most managing with the flock.

As the oldest, Sarah sees herself as the overall supporter.

"I am not the best showman but do my best to support my siblings and the sheep industry overall," she said.

Josh does a lot of marketing, logistics and genetics research for the family's show sheep.

"We created Ridgeview Show Lambs to market our lambs," said Josh. "When you buy from us, we will be there to mentor you if you want that."

Josh also serves as the president of the Wisconsin Club Lamb Association.

Tim was unanimously voted the workhorse of the family.

"He's always working and he's willing to do anything," said Sarah. "He just wants the job done."

Their youngest brother, Paul, was deemed the best showman by his siblings. He 'humbly' agreed that this is true.

As the official youngest member of the family, Hannah is the only one still showing at youth shows. She also sews blankets and leg wraps for the sheep.

The family is proud of the genetics they have built through the years within the flock. Kevin notes that because so many people have helped and continue to help them, they try to be mentors for other exhibitors.

Collectively the family agreed the biggest reward is seeing lambs they sold to exhibitors do well in shows across the state.

"We work together fairly well most of the time," Sarah laughed.

The family gets to as many sheep shows as possible during the season. This year there were 10 shows in the lineup.

To read the full story, visit wfbf.com/member-profiles/riemer-family-finds-their-niche-with-sheep.



Holiday Lighting Tips for Outside Decorating



It seems the holidays approach quickly every year. After Thanksgiving, all the holiday activities begin. It's a tradition for many people to hang holiday lights outside their house to make their neighborhood cheerful. Both kids and adults find enjoyment in seeing the variety of decorations on display. It's important to keep safety in mind to ensure your holidays don't start out with any surprise accidents.

SAFETY TIPS FOR HANGING HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Use the Proper Type of Lights

When hanging lights on the outside of your house, use lights, extension cords and timers specific for outdoor use. These are built to be weather resistant.

- When using an extension cord in potential wet weather, make sure that the connectors and plugs are waterproof. The plug on the cord should also be covered with a rainproof cap. If you have multiple cords to plug in, opt for an outdoor extension cord that has multiple plug outlets to act as a safe alternative to a surge protector.
- An outdoor timer is a convenient solution to program your lights to turn on and shut off automatically every day. Not only is this convenient but it can save energy by not having your lights on at unnecessary times during the day. Outdoor timers should also be weather resistant for damp locations.

STAY SAFE ON THE ROOF

There's a good chance you might be on your roof at some point during the light hanging process. Keeping safety in mind will help

prevent accidents.

- Wear proper footwear with good traction to have a solid grip when walking on shingles.
- Move cautiously and watch where you step to avoid any tools or objects.
- When positioning the ladder, make sure it is on a flat, stable surface on the ground.
- Avoid poor weather. Do not go on the roof when it is windy, wet, snowy, or icy as the chance of slips and falls increases.

Organize Your Process

Create a layout plan. Before you start hanging lights, have a layout in mind of which lights you want hung in certain areas. Check to make sure you have enough of each type of light. Make a run to the store to pick up more if you need and grab an extra box just for good measure. It's a good idea to have an extra box on hand if a strand of lights burns out during the season. It can be tough to find lights after peak season as many stores' selections become limited.

Plug your lights in to test they work before you hang them up. Perhaps you accidentally put away a strand that was burnt out last year and forgot about it or the bulbs became loose in the process. Checking them beforehand eliminates any extra work before they are strung up.

When taking your lights down at the end of the season, take an extra minute to replace any bulbs that burnt out and put the lights away in an organized manner. You'll thank yourself the following year.

Tip: Take advantage of a mild fall day to hang your holiday lights before the cold Wisconsin weather sets in. Don't worry, you can wait to plug them in until closer to the holidays.

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gather AROUND THE TABLE

Recipes and photos courtesy of the National Pork Board, Des Moines, Iowa.
 Visit gatherwisconsin.com for more recipes.

Garlic Dijon Pork Tenderloin

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. pork tenderloin
- ¼ c. whole grain Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 sweet potatoes (peeled and ¼" dice)
- 1 red bell pepper (¼" dice)
- 1 poblano pepper (¼" dice)
- 2 scallions (sliced on a bias)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a small bowl whisk together Dijon mustard, honey, garlic, salt and pepper. Rub each pork tenderloin with the sauce until thoroughly coated.
3. Over high heat, add olive oil to large cast iron or oven-safe skillet. Sear tenderloin on each side, then add sweet potatoes, red bell pepper, and poblano to the skillet. Top with remaining sauce, place into oven. Roast until the pork reaches an internal temperature of 145°F, about 10 to 15 minutes. Let rest for 3 minutes before slicing and serving. Garnish with scallions.



Ground Pork Cabbage Roll Soup

INGREDIENTS

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| • 2 c. green cabbage, chopped | • 1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes | oregano) |
| • 2 Tbsp. olive oil | • 1 14-oz. can tomato sauce | • 1 c. white rice (uncooked) |
| • 1 lb. ground pork | • 4 c. chicken stock | • 1 tsp. salt |
| • 1 yellow onion, diced | • 1 tsp. paprika | • ½ tsp. pepper |
| • 3 cloves garlic, minced | • ½ Tbsp. marjoram (or | |

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat.
2. Add the diced onion and ground pork. Cook for approximately 3-5 minutes.
3. Add in the minced garlic, paprika, marjoram, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine.
4. Stir in the cabbage, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, rice, and chicken stock and bring the mixture to a low boil.
5. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the rice is tender and ground pork reaches an internal temperature of 160°F.
6. Stir throughout the process to be sure the rice doesn't stick to the bottom. Once the rice is done, serve immediately.

