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Grass Run Farms to offer product samples at local food fest Nov. 2

Ryan and Kristine Jepsen of Dorchester started Grass Run Farms in 2006 to sell healthful grass fed beef they had raised themselves to friends and neighbors.

Today, Grass Run Farms represents dozens of family-run farms in the Upper Midwest producing and marketing the region's best 100 percent grass-fed beef.

"Grass Run Farms stands for long-term land stewardship and the far-reaching health benefits of grass-fed and pasture-raised meats. We're building healthy soils, managing pastures that sequester tons of atmospheric carbon and tending livestock in a humane and respectful manner," the Jepsens say.

They started out selling from a chest cooler at farmer's market. Now, Grass Run Farms works with the region's best distributors to market their beef wholesale to grocers, restaurants, and institutions around the region. Their beef sticks and jerky – perfect for lunches, travel and all-around snacking – are also available online (grassrunfarms.com and Amazon.com).

"As consumer demand for grass-fed beef and more accountable food grew, we realized we filled a niche between professional farmers and consumers," Ryan Jepsen says. "We coordinate year-round supply, work with new producers who want to make grass-fed production profitable, build solid relationships with distributors and our processing partners, and help stores and restaurants tell the story of what our beef represents: a healthful, high-quality and accountable alternative to mainstream beef. Our grass-fed is known as the best-tasting and most consistent on the market."



Grass Run Farms' entire product line is 100 percent grass-fed, antibiotic and hormone-free, grazed on pastures as much as possible, and treated as humanely as possible in raising and harvesting. All producers who work with Grass Run Farms sign affidavits each time they send animals for harvest, stating that they adhere to these standards.

"We know our producers personally and not only visit each other's farms but work together to advance grass-fed beef research, particularly balanced nutrition," Jepsen says.

You'll have a unique opportunity to visit with the folks from Grass Run Farms at the Feast! Festival & Tradeshow in Rochester, MN on Sunday, Nov. 2

"We always look forward to meeting consumers and answering their questions," Jepsen says. "We're also interested in forging more partnerships in the regional food world through the tradeshow. It takes strong, straightforward relationships to build this kind of alternative business."

The Feast! Festival is your prime stop to satisfy your curiosity about local foods. Visitors will be able to taste and purchase a variety of foods that are locally made throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. Meet the farmers and artisans and hear the stories behind their foods. Admission to the festival is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. There is an additional charge for beer and wine tasting.

Following the Festival, the Tradeshow on Nov. 3 will offer an exclusive experience for exhibitors to network with buyers.

For more information about the Feast! Festival & Tradeshow, please visit www.local-feast.org. To keep in touch with the latest updates, like Feast! Local Food Network on Facebook, follow @Local_Feast on Twitter and use #localFEAST to make sure your voice is heard.

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