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LimeSpring Beef to open Spring 2015; starts product promotion now at Feast! Local Food Festival

LIME SPRINGS, IOWA - Jesse Stevens knew people had an interested in buying local beef that was raised naturally with low environmental impact. He knew farmers who were willing to raise that kind of meat. He also knew there was no infrastructure in-between to help buyers and farmers meet each other.

Stevens, working with a host of other community members, set forth to change that.

In August of 2013 construction began on a \$7 million, 25,000 square foot packaging plant near Lime Springs. The facility is state-of-the-art and will process up to 108 head daily at capacity. It is designed with Temple Grandin's design concepts of treating the cattle humanly and keeping the animals as stress-free as possible.

Stevens grew up in the Howard County and returned to the area in about 2006 after retiring. In December of 2011 he and his wife, Pat, invited some farmers into their home to discuss the idea of how to create a sustainable meat processing operation that benefits farmers, consumers, animals and the environment.

Stevens says, "At LimeSprings Beef, we will address what many discerning meat buyers have cared about for years: humane treatment of animals, transparency in labeling, no added hormones, naturally raised options, low environmental impact and greater sustainability for our communities and family farmers."

Their vision is to "empower discerning meat buyers to know their farmer and know their food. By tracking the cattle that comes from each family-owned and operated farm, we will offer consumers the confidence that they're receiving high quality, locally grown beef that was raised under the protocols detailed on the product label. By purchasing Lime Springs Beef, consumers will support Iowa and Minnesota farms and a processing system that will generate minimal stress to the animal and leave minimal impact on the environment."

Farmers selling their beef through LimeSprings will be certified and agree to adhere to high standards that meet the company's goals and vision. There will be protocols for farmers to raise the beef to follow in three categories: grass fed, raised naturally and commercial beef.

LimeSprings Beef is developing several innovative ideas. They are designing a proprietary technology that allows the tracking of each and every animal that enters the plant, all the way back to what the animal was fed as it was raised, said Michael Spinks, who was hired as general manager of the facility in March of 2014.

Each package of LimeSprings Beef will have a code that buyers can scan with their mobile device. They will allow them to "meet the farmer" who raised the animal via the internet.

The beef will be raised within a 100 mile radius (partially to reduce the stress to the cattle associated with long hauling). The plant will slaughter, process and package, and then sell the meat to retail customers within a 400 mile radius.

It was hoped the plant would be open by September, but the plan is now for it to be open in spring of 2015.

Spinks said revisions in the design along with the need to add a waste water treatment facility have pushed them back from the original date.

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

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.

"Our ultimate success will have to do with connecting people with their food," said Spinks.

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.

