

# Why Buy Grass-Fed Meat & Dairy

Grass-fed meat and dairy taste great and are good for you!

## Did you know?

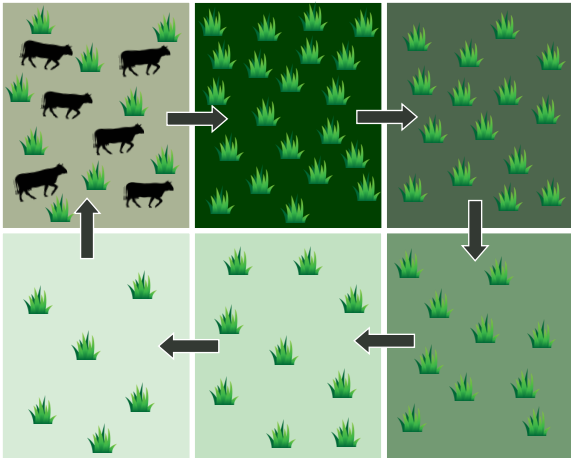
- **41% of milk produced** in Wisconsin comes from the **largest 5%** of farms with herds averaging 1,172 confined **dairy cows**.
- These dairy cows spend their entire life on concrete and average just **2 productive years** in the herd before they are culled.
- Feed for these high producing dairy cows is often trucked in from as far away as Nebraska.
- **Beef cattle** may or may not be raised on pasture early in their life.
- Beef cattle raised in Wisconsin are often sent to feedlots in Nebraska and Kansas for the last 3 months of 'finishing' before slaughter where they are fed on a corn-based diet with a small amount of roughage (hay) and no pasture.

## It doesn't have to be that way.

- Cattle, sheep and goats are **ruminants** able to digest grass and clover and turn them into high quality milk and meat. They can live entirely on pasture and hay with no grain.
- **Perennial pastures** can deliver ecosystem services like improving water quality and carbon storage while providing high quality, tasty grass-fed meat and dairy.



## How is a managed grazing farm different?



### For more information visit:

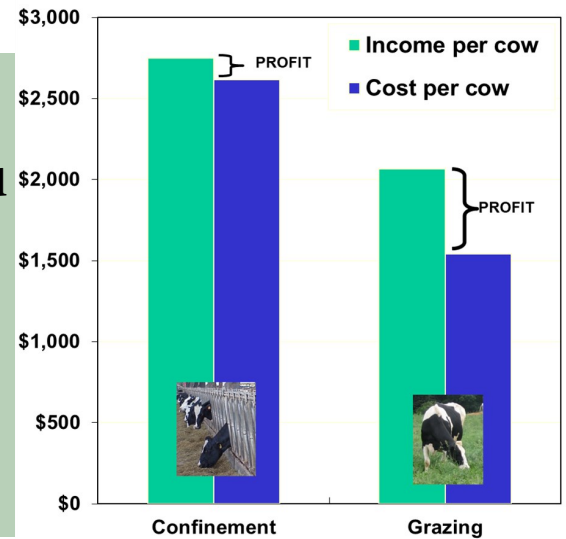
- [Grasslandag.org](http://Grasslandag.org)
- [GrassWorks.org](http://GrassWorks.org)
- [Sauk County Land Resources & Environment Department](#)
- [Green Lands Blue Waters](#)

- Most or all of the farm is planted to well-managed, **perennial** grass & clover pastures instead of annually cultivated corn and soybeans.
- The herd is moved through a series of small subsections called **paddocks** which they will graze for 1-3 days before moving onto the next paddock.
- This allows the plants in each paddock to **rest and recover** anywhere from 30-45 days between grazings.
- **Environmental benefits** of perennial pastures include:
  - Improved soil health
  - Reduced or eliminated synthetic pesticide use
  - Minimized soil erosion and runoff improved water quality
  - High quality grassland wildlife and pollinator habitat



## How does it work?

- **The cattle do the work:** harvesting their own feed and spreading their own manure.
- The rest-rotation cycle makes for **healthy, productive and highly nutritious pasture** for cattle.
- The cattle are **healthier** because they have all the exercise and fresh air they need.
- **Less labor** and **less equipment** are needed for the grazer since the cattle are feeding themselves.
- Less cost means **more income per cow** and fewer cows needed to earn a living.



## Taking care of the planet



Each acre of pasture on a managed grazing farm compared to a conventional row crop farm provides:

- Home for **10 times more** grassland birds and **thousands** more pollinators.
- Protects soil from erosion, saving **2 tons** of soil per acre/year.
- Keeps **16 pounds** of phosphorus from entering waterbodies per year.
- **Minimizes** use of commercial fertilizer and pesticides.
- Improves soil health and stores **39% more** carbon.

## Taking care of yourself

### Grass-fed meat and dairy offer outstanding nutrition:

- More Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA) and other healthy fats.
- Better Omega 3:Omega 6 ratio.
- More Vitamin A, D, and E.
- Other antioxidants and phytonutrients from fresh pasture.

*And it tastes great!*



## What you can do?

### Buy Wisconsin-raised grass-fed products:

- Buy direct from a local grazing farm (find one at: [Farm Fresh Atlas](#), [Eatwild](#), [American Grassfed Assn.](#))
- [Wisconsin Meadows](#) grass-fed beef and pastured pork.
- [Organic Valley](#): grass-milk products, organic ruminants must have access to pasture and at least 30% of their diet from pasture.

### Get involved:

- Become a member of [GrassWorks](#), the Midwest's Grazing Organization.
- Attend a pasture walk to see how local graziers are using managed grazing on their farms.
- Attend meetings for a local [Producer-Led Watershed Protection Group](#).
- Contribute to GrassWorks and other organizations that support grassland agriculture.
- Learn about farm policy and how it can be changed to support grazing farms.