

Do you know where your dinner comes from?

In these frightening days of beef recalls, genetically modified foods, and large scale factory farming of cattle, chickens and pig, it was a dream come



Fawns' Foibles

ANGELIQUE FAWNS

true for my husband and I to buy our little farm in York Region and start trying to produce our own food.

It has been a very interesting learning curve learning how to ethically raise our few cattle, Berkshire pigs, chickens and sheep. Our main focus has been to provide the most pleasant living arrangements possible for the animals and give them the longest life feasible. We are also trying to feed them the most natural foods in the most environmentally friendly way possible, and give them very few drugs/injections.

Of course we do worm our cows and sheep, but we don't shoot them full of antibiotics and they are grass fed, with almost no grain at all. Fundamentally, animals that are allowed to have sunshine under their backs and green grass under their feet are miles ahead of those subjected to factory farming.

We work really hard at our dream of ethical sustainable farming, and what I find very shocking is the general public perception of someone who eats animals they raise. I have been told several times (PS, this would be from people NOT involved or educated in agriculture) that I am cruel to eat animals I raise.

Cruel. This is from carnivorous consumers who buy their meat from a supermarket, deboned, skin-off, and who have no idea or concern about the life or process of how that piece of meat came to sit on that Styrofoam slab.

If only there was more education and thought from the general consumer about what they consume... what they feed to their families. Ignorance is not more ethical than education, hard work and growing your own food. Not everyone has room to raise their own pork and beef in their backyard, but everyone can source out a local farmer. There are so many small farms still operational in our

region with exceptional meat, produce and eggs being raised.

I believe those that make the effort to support local farmers and stay educated about the treatment of what they consume are to be applauded. It is morally correct. Not cruel.

I have seen large scale pig operations (thousands of pigs in a barn, farrowing crates, etc.) If I had to live the life of a pig, I would want to live on a farm like ours. We have little Quonset huts filled with clean straw for them in an outdoor electric paddock. In the summer they have a big mud pond for wallowing in.

When raised in a more natural environment there is absolutely no need for farrowing crates. Our sows farrow out naturally in a round outdoor shelter. If you provide a sow with enough room, she will not crush her piglets. It is amazing to watch a sow get ready to get down and nurse... she carefully checks all the straw where she is going to lay down in, and then she flips the little piglets she finds out of the way. Then she counts them. (I swear they do...) and only then does she lie down. We have lost zero piglets to being crushed by their mothers.

Our grass fed cows have to live longer before they reach an optimum weight for slaughter, and I believe extra age in the cow makes the meat taste better. I also give them names, feed them carrots and apples, and pat them. (My husband is maybe less into the naming and giving treats) If they get cuts on their legs, we clean out the wounds and make sure they heal properly.

And yes, after fawning after them, feeding them, watering them, letting them roam our green pastures and watching them grow carefully...

I eat them.

May your family only eat the most nutritious and ethically raised food in the New Year!!!



Roxanne is a purebred Hereford cow owned by the Fawns family. She comes when she is called, and is really fond of carrots and apples. Currently our freezer is full of beef from her last steer. He was slaughtered at 26 months old, his hanging weight was 840lbs.

Photo/ANGELIQUE FAWNS

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