



184 Burnett Road  
Freeport, ME 04032

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Freeport,  
ME 04032  
Permit #42

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## You give more than meat when you give a Wolfe's Neck gift

This holiday season we are making a particular effort to get our friends to send gift packages to their friends. It is a wonderful way to introduce new people to our product and it helps support other operations at the farm.

With each gift we send an attractive gift card and a letter explaining why it is so important to buy Wolfe's Neck Beef and to support our growers. The text of that letter follows:

The history of Wolfe's Neck Natural Beef goes back to 1959 when Eleanor and Lawrence Smith started with 17 Black Angus cows and a belief in the value of preserving open space.

Their vision took a dramatic turn in 2001 when farm manager Erick Jensen, with the enthusiastic support of family members and the Wolfe's Neck Farm Foundation, started the present program, enlisting the cooperation of Maine farmers to grow beef to our protocols. Within a year, the number of cattle going to market rose from 200 annually to 4,000. More than 50 Maine farmers now raise calves for the program and the increased demand has resulted in the first planned feedlot expansion in the state in decades.

Modeled on a West Coast Coop, Oregon Country Beef, Wolfe's Neck Natural Beef is a non-profit that operates like a de facto cooperative. Our producers are paid a premium because we have been able to develop a premium market. The extra money they receive is crucial to their ability to farm profitably.

Profitability is the key to maintaining the working landscape as one farmer after another told us at a conference on preserving farmland sponsored by the

Wolfe's Neck Farm Foundation. And this program reflects the Foundation's primary mission:

To demonstrate innovative practices and marketing strategies in alternative/organic agriculture that can help preserve and revitalize Maine farming.

In the wake of our increased visibility through supermarket distribution, farm manager Jensen has received more than a hundred calls from Maine farmers who would like to participate in the program. He is now working to increase the herds of those already supplying us and teaching other farmers, particularly stressed dairy farmers, to raise beef cattle. It is his hope that in a few years, the Maine countryside will be dotted with signs designating which farms raise Wolfe's Neck Natural Beef and he fully expects more acreage to be under beef production than is now under potato production.

To what do we attribute our success? Our model has presented no risk to the individual farmers so they have been more interested in participating than they would be otherwise. For the buyer, we have guaranteed uniform high quality and reliability of supply, something our individual small producers could not do on their own. At the same time, we have been the ones to develop the premium market and deal with its complexities.

The result is what we call "market-based environmentalism," where the consumer is willing to spend more for a quality product that is raised in an environmentally responsible manner.