



History of Haanover View Farms

Born a farmer, to a farmer I was not.

My father, a self employed stone mason by trade, embedded solid old school European values of hard work, perfection and dedication into me, regardless if I wanted it or not. However, the foundation was well laid! My mother, a homemaker and caregiver to the elderly, encouraged out of the box thinking, promoted experimentation and supported adventure.

I grew up on fresh country air, freedom to move, with dirt under my fingernails, cuts and scars on most of my body parts from time to time. When other kids were just getting their training wheels removed from their bicycle, I was getting comfortable on our 8N Ford tractor. Bicycles were better used to ride down cattle paths to retrieve cows in time for milking, the muddier the better! What challenge did a paved road provide?

Not surprisingly, the straight road frequently traveled had no appeal to me. No challenge, no adventure, no mystery beyond the next corner....So unlike the masses, I followed my dreams towards a career in agriculture and in 1981, agricultural collage, New Liskeard in northern Ontario.

The passing of my sister, Monica, in the spring of 1993, marked the beginning of redefining life's values. No more government job and full time farming.

In the fall of 1993, enter Renate, a nurse and small town girl from Germany. Marrying a farmer was not in her cards, but after two years of transatlantic dating, well, the rest is history.

I have always carried the spiritual belief that I was put on this great earth for a divine reason; the tiller of the soil, the harvester of the crop and the supplier of food for the masses. The catch is that a focus on tilling, harvesting and providing will make for a very poor farmer indeed. Marketing, the extracting of a fair and sustainable return for one's efforts and investments, while providing value to ensure repeat sales is the missing puzzle piece that gets the farmer off the financial roller coaster ride of open market realities.

In 1998 Haanover View Farms rose up from the hobby farm that my parents purchased in 1964, hoping for the fulfillment of a lifelong dream and passion to farm. The ebb and flow nature of the hog industry, health issues in the barns and being forced to accept meager returns for our efforts and investments, while having to pay escalating prices for inputs all took their toll. From 1996 to 2000 we lost a large sum of money, were forced into an unwanted mortgage, had our credit rating damaged, our pride and faith shredded and life turned inside out.

Nevertheless, we have and still believe that when life gets difficult, it is best to get better....not bitter.

In December of 2003, looking at a 21,000 dollar feed bill for the month, losing thirty-five dollars per hog, and our 1550 pigs being ravished by illness and debt load mounting, a plan and revised direction was devised for Haanover View Farms.

Therefore, in 2000/01 Haanover View Farms redefined itself, its values and its production methodology and continues to make adjustments.

We developed the following guiding principles:

1. to be sustainable - short and long term and whole farm
2. commitment to the role of a farmer - produce safe, nutritious, affordable, high quality and good value food for society while keeping it natural
3. we want our products to be affordable for the average consumer and strive to be on their dinner plates seven days a week because we do not feel that food is a luxury item
4. consistently obtain a fair return from the market place
5. to pass on our small borrowed piece of the planet to the next generation in as good or better condition as we received it
6. stay local- for inputs and for marketing
7. family - we strongly feel that the farm, farm life and contact with the public will Give our four children skills and experiences that will benefit them for a lifetime.
8. honesty and transparency

Whoever said that the road less traveled in the hog industry is the wrong one? Thank goodness for riding bicycles down cattle paths.