



Promoting Organic Farming By Canadians, For Canadians

In 1989, at a kitchen table in Ontario, a group of local farmers were discussing their concerns about the farming industry. They had concerns about the sustainability of commercialized farming practices. They were interested in the changing consumer demand for more natural food products. And, they were worried that the very reason they had all decided to become farmers in the first place – the love of the land - was being compromised.

They all agreed that it was time to give back to the land and produce food the way that their grandparents and great grandparents had; without any synthetically produced chemicals, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides and with respect for all of the things that actually make farming possible - the land, the animals and the environment. With these principles in mind, they created OntarBio Organic Farmers Co-operative, and its marketing and distribution arm, Organic Meadow, now one of Canada's most successful farmer's co-operatives and organic food companies.

Rooted in organic, ecological farming and in the values embodied by family farming, Organic Meadow supports Canadian organic producers, choosing to market organic products from Canadian family farms and to process these products at Canadian family-owned businesses.

Organic Meadow family farm members are located across Ontario. They range in size from small acreages to several hundred acres. Livestock, as well as the land, water and crops used to raise them are treated with the utmost respect and all Organic Meadow farms are certified by Organic Crop Producers & Processors. The farmers are keen consumers of the latest organic farming techniques from around the world.



Raising animals and crops organically takes skill and commitment. Crops are rotated to keep the soil rich in nutrients and to keep pests and insects away. Herds are often mixed with several different varieties of cows including Holsteins, Jerseys, Brown Swiss, Milking Shorthorns and Dutch Belteds. They are raised humanely in low stress environments, with plenty of opportunity to socialize (yes, cows are social animals), fed 100% organic feed and have full access to fresh water, open pasture and plenty of space. OntarBio dairy cows are not given any antibiotics or synthetic hormones. If they are unwell, which is remarkably rare, they receive the best in homeopathic and herbal care and treatment.



Organic Meadow began with the production of organic grains and by 1995 Organic Meadow certified organic milk was in producing and being distributed to consumers across the country. By word of mouth alone, the enthusiasm for Canada's first organic milk spread quickly. By 1998, several other products such as eggs and frozen vegetables were added to the list of Organic Meadow products and there are now more than fifty different certified organic products carrying the Organic Meadow name, including milk and lactose free milk, half and half cream, whipping cream, yogurt, ice cream, cheese, sour cream, cream cheese, cottage cheese, butter, eggs and frozen vegetables. They are available across the country in both mainstream and specialty grocery stores.

According to Canadian Organic Growers, in 1992 there were 1174 certified organic farms in Canada. By 2004, that number had jumped to 3670, (*In Ontario the corresponding numbers are 148 – 489*), an increase of more than 200%, and by all accounts this trend is not likely to slow down anytime soon. Organic Meadow has played, and continues to play a key role in the growth of what can only be described as a farming and food industry phenomenon. By providing the highest quality food products to Canadians, by focusing on the health and well-being of their farmland and animals they are contributing to the sustainability of the family farm economy and a healthy environment

OntarBio and Organic Meadow are a perfect examples of how a conversation around a kitchen table can be just as productive and rewarding as one that takes place around a board room table.

There are over 40 Organic Meadow farmers across Ontario. For more information about these farms, please call Jennifer Whiting at Organic Meadow. She will answer your questions or put you in touch with a farmer in your area.

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