

Hampshire Farmer Awarded Frontera Farmer Foundation Grant

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Ann Getzelman, owner of Fox Prairie Farm in Hampshire, didn't have the highest of hopes when she filled out the application for a grant from the Frontera Farmer Foundation last fall. The organization, headed by world renowned Chef Rick Bayless, awards thousands of dollars every year to farmers. "They keep extending the deadline because there were so many applicants," says Getzelman, "But I thought, hey if I don't apply-I don't have a chance."

Her theory paid off, winning Getzelman a \$2,300. Grant, which she'll use to purchase a cargo trailer and freezer to help in the direct market of goat meat to the public. In only her second year in the business of selling the meat from the goats she raises. Getzelman feels very fortunate to have been included as a grant recipient.

With a degree in pre-veterinary medicine from Illinois State University, Getzelman says her true passion has always been working with animals. Getzelman currently watches over around 100 goats on the Hampshire farm where she grew up. She began raising goats on the farm for shows and breeding purposes and in 2009 decided to market the goats' meat.

An award winning chef-restaurateur, cookbook author, and television personality, Rick Bayless runs two popular Chicago restaurants, Frontera Grill and Topolobampo. He is the founder of the Frontera Farmer Foundation, an organization that supports small local farmers serving the Chicago area by providing them with capital development grants. In 2010, the Foundation awarded grants to 18 Midwestern Family Farms totaling \$186,000.

Getzelman will use her new storage transport and cold storage equipment to offer her products at the Batavia's Farmers Market this summer. She plans to explore other venues and expand her operation as things progress.

"This grant is going to be a big help," says Getzelman, who admits that the process of starting her own business has not always been easy.

Generosity has come from others in the farming community as well. Getzelman says she could not have gotten started without the help of Mark and Linda Schramer, owners of Farm Direct Black Angus in Maple Park. "They have been very kind, taking me under their wing and helping me learn the ropes," she says. The Schramers helped Getzelman find a place to process and package the meat and identify customers, and provided her with a frozen storage.

"Just before Christmas last year, I asked them what I could give them for all of their help, and they wouldn't take a dime," says Getzelman. "How many people would do something like that? We've been very blessed," she adds. The Rowletts, who farm next door, haul out the manure from Getzelman's farm, doing in a half a day what would have been a long daily chore for Getzelman and her fiancé Brian, who helps with the feeding and care of the animals. Family members have also pitched in to help her make a go of the operation.

Goat cuisine is a healthy choice according to Getzelman, who says that the meat is known for its low cholesterol content. And the taste? Getzelman says she's gotten nothing but good reviews.

"I tell my customers that I want to hear what they think, good or bad," she says. "So far everyone has come back saying that they really enjoy the taste." She adds that it passed the most important taste test last year, when she served some up to her father, who passed away last fall. She says, "I served goat-burgers to my fiancé and my dad, lifelong cattle farmer and beef fan, and they both loved it."

For more information about the Frontera Farmer Foundation, visit www.rickbayless.com. Find Getzelman's Fox Prairie Farm on the web at www.foxprairiefarm.com or on the Kane County Farm Bureau's local farm and Farmer's Market online directory, www.bountyofkane.org