



Farm to Fork Tours Provide On-farm Connections

The Wisconsin Beef Council, through your checkoff investment, continues to offer Farm to Fork tours for influencer groups across the state. You may ask what an influencer group is – this could include students enrolled in culinary programs at technical colleges, chefs, dietitians, public health staff, or others – but primarily groups of individuals who have questions about how beef is raised, and who will have the opportunity to carry that message to others in their personal or professional circles. This gives them the chance to get onto farms, talk with farmers, and hear more about topics that they need more information on.

We recently hosted a Farm to Fork Tour for 35 culinary students and instructors from the Waukesha Area Technical College. The group traveled to Merrywater Farms (Keith York's family dairy), Adams Farms (Dave Adams beef farm), and Lake Geneva Country Meats. Topics that Keith and Dave covered spanned a wide swath. Some of the highlights were:



- Sustainability – Keith talked about manure application on his farm, and how the dairy produced enough manure so that neither their farm nor some of their neighbors need to purchase commercial fertilizer.
- Antibiotic use – both Keith and Dave talked about how they only use antibiotics to treat cattle when necessary, and that they use antibiotics judiciously and in conjunction with herd health programs – like vaccinations – to keep animals healthy.
- Grass-fed vs. grain-fed – Dave talked about the differences behind these two production practices, and that the end beef product is essentially nutritionally the same. He also addressed the fact that grain-fed cattle are on grass most of their lives, and even when transitioning to the feedyard they still receive a high percentage of their diet as forage.



Nick Vorpagel at Lake Geneva Country Meats also opened their doors and showed the students behind the scenes at their meat processing plant, from the carcass cooler to cut floor to smoker and sausage making rooms and their beautiful retail meat case.

Lastly, the bus time gives us the chance to talk more about other topics of interest, including the history of the beef industry in Wisconsin, the beef lifecycle, and the

many benefits of beef in the diet.

The Wisconsin Beef Council would be happy to offer tours to other influencer groups in your area. If you have connections to organizations, technical colleges or others that may have interest in seeing behind the scenes about beef production, please reach out and let me know. We also have handouts and other resources that we can provide to help you share the message locally.