

February 2026

Janzen Family Farms Newsletter

Best wishes for the New Year 2026 from Janzen Family Farms, in particular the grass-fed beef division! It is again time to share a few updates and fresh perspectives. The weather demonstrated its mid-continental extremes with two drought years (2023-4) being followed by a very wet 2025 spring, summer, and fall; two cold winters followed by this current rather mild season up until the recent storm. The weather affected range growth and hay production. We have maintained our herd at around 30 head, consisting of 10-12 cows, a corresponding number of calves, and 6-10 two-year-olds for slaughter. For two years we have rented a bull from our breeder Torrey Ball of Grassroots Beef of Hutchinson, with 100% pregnancy rates. Conversations with Torrey highlight the importance of genetics in producing a quality 100% grass-fed animal that finishes satisfactorily on grass. We share a few recent photos of the herd and our local landscape.

Our very convenient arrangement with Peabody Sausage House has unfortunately come to an end with its sale to Plainview Beef Co. This company is using the facility in Peabody to do its own processing, but without serving local producers like us. That being said, we are happy to announce that Champs Meats of Halstead will do our processing going forward. Those of you who use the “locker” order method will find them very easy to work with.

The media continues to offer conflicting narratives about eating beef, often misrepresenting grass-fed beef. Recently, *The New York Times* carried an article (January 12, 2026, by Sachi Mulkey) about a study that concluded there is little difference in methane emissions between feedlot factory and range-finished cattle. The study assumed that grass-fed animals require three years to finish, thus 1/3 longer than feedlot ones, thus more methane. In fact, we market our animals at two years, with average weights of 1,000 lbs. Other analyses show that sequestration of carbon in grass-fed herding offsets some or most of the effect of methane release. We suspect that you also value the quality taste and the nutritional dimension of high Omega-3 fatty acids, in addition to the ecological impact. The latest issue of *Stockman Grass Farmer* reviews Ben Sargent and Mary Lin’s new book *Mootopia: How to Easily Fix Human Health and Heal the Planet*. This work stresses the importance of soil microbial action in the human-animal-grassland-soil mix that not only increases soil regeneration but lessens human allergies.



Cows enjoying an alfalfa snack



Solar pump for the thirsty herd



*Newly constructed island bridge
(Thanks Calvin & Henry Janzen)*

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As most of you know, Janzen Family Farms is a family corporation with multiple stockholders backing a smaller set of the executive committee. Ben and Halie Duerksen live on the farmstead and lease the cropland; Ben helps with grass-fed herd management and offers his own line of Berkshire pork (see his contact below to inquire). As the years pass, we find the “next generation” moving into responsible slots. Grandson Max, son of Bernd and Kristi, has been helping John with the digital side of the farm, particularly the website and beef marketing. Max is spending several days here this week while he manages his solar energy business from afar (see him pictured above with the herd). We also introduce Max’s second Cousin Julius from Berlin, Germany. Some days after enjoying Janzen Family Farms grass-fed beef at the August reunion at Rock Springs Ranch, he came up with this promotional text:

“Good and fresh but that doesn’t nail it. It’s like the evening sun that shines in your face while you drink a beer with your buddy. Or you know the feeling if you lay down in your bed and you have a fresh cold pillow. That is the feeling you get if you eat Janzen grass-fed beef. It’s like your tongue would say “it’s to die for” and brings it then into paradise, this feeling is indescribably good. I just say try it for yourself and be blown away.”

Although we continue to be members of the Kansas Grown Farmers Market in Wichita, we have not had available inventory to sell. We anticipate the same pattern for this year. We will continue to prioritize bulk sales of whole, half, quarter, and eighths. If you have custom requests, call or write regarding availability and schedule. As always, we appreciate your business and support over the years and look forward to what this new year will bring.

Written by John & Maximilian Janzen.

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