The Real Reason Farm Meat Tastes and Performs Better Transcript

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Podcast Intro and Guest Introduction

Do you train combat sports? Have you ever been injured? Dr. Megan Jimenez is an army orthopedic sports surgeon and jujitsu black belt. This is Dr Jujitsu, your go-to podcast for combat, sports, military performance, injury prevention, and treatment.

New episodes drop the first Friday of each month. All right, I'm Megan Jimenez, North Beatix surgeon, and I am here with my lovely friend. I Am Avery Claire Rigglesworth, owner and operator of Lily Hill Farm.

So tell me about how you got started here and what got you into this lovely farming business. So about three, a little over three years ago now, my husband and I moved back home from, we were actually overseas working in international finance.

How Lily Hill Farm Got Started

We moved to help save the farm out of foreclosure. So we ran it as a traditional cow-calf operation, which is essentially auctioning our young cattle off once a year to go into the traditional feedlot system.

a little over two years and then decided to transition into a direct consumer business model. So we essentially, so all cattle are born, raised and finished on our farm now and we ship our beef all over the U. S.

and you also sell locally. And what made you want to do this? So I think my main drive to do it was, you know, my dad was like, we're gonna lose the farm.

And I really wanted to step up. I wanted help him. and I don't think agriculture really was my calling per se then, but I always had a very special place in my heart for the farms.

So, I just didn't feel like it's quite ready for us to, see the firm get sold off and developed. I kind of then I think really grew to appreciate agriculture and the difficulties but also how rewarding and beautiful it can be as well and really just trying to make a change the best way I know how.

Now, I know most people get their meat from grocery stores, right?

Direct-to-Consumer Beef and Farm Practices

I used to get my meat form grocery store all the time until I found local farmers like you, there's so many local farmer in the area, and I'm from New Jersey, so I didn't know anything about this, we live more in city, by the beach, always going to the grocery, just got whatever meat.

So what makes meat here different? You know, you know I can taste the difference, then I won't go back to grocery as much anymore unless I am in a pinch, for the most part my meet comes from here.

The biggest difference you're going to see is the cattle being raised in a pastoral environment, and I think that has a huge impact on not only the quality of the meat, but it really impacts the equality of their life as well.

And I that that can portray into meat quality more than people. really originally would think. So I think that it's really just has to do with how they're raised and also being born, raised, and finished all on the same farm you're really reducing stress that that cattle has endure throughout its lifetime when they are shipped off you know if we were selling them through the traditional system if they were being sold off the farm they would be shipped off out west and they have to endure a very long haul that's very traumatic on them and a lot of times when they get loaded off in the feed lots they then have be given antibiotics to help prevent any type of shipping fever and there's a lots of

other things that You know, just that hauling aspect really escalates the stress that an animal has to go through throughout their life.

Even if it is short term, it does impact other things within the quality of their lives. And what are they eating here versus what we get at the grocery store?

And, what's their lifelike here? So they're raised on pasture 24-7 and we also cut and bale all of our own hay. And we do supplement some groups with grain off the farm and that really depends on the group and their nutritional needs.

So we have some cattle that you know might need a little extra help and the forage on our farm in Georgia it especially the natural forage can be lacking in certain essential nutrients for some of our cattle that need a little bit more of a higher caloric intake and more energy out of their foods.

So we do supplement some groups with grain, but on a whole the majority of cattle are pasture raised 365. They're family. So what do you think is stopping the population from going kind of back?

Why Local Meat Tastes Different

Like you keep saying traditional, but to me, this is traditional. This is where we came from. I always talk about the ancestors and eating off the land and the cows and all the animals that we have eaten years and years ago, hundreds of years, were from the lands.

The population boom, trying to feed more people, how do we bring it back here? I think it's really a cultural thing. It's what we're used to. And I also think social media can be a really beautiful tool in showing people that, you know, there's other ways to source your food.

You have options. I think that, you know, we do, in the U. S., we have a very efficient, our beef production system is very effective, but just because it's efficient doesn't mean it is necessarily better for our health.

So I think we really need to step back and try to support local farms and direct consumer farms as much as we can because they're really driving more of the regenerative and sustainable agriculture movements.

And they are not being kind of forced by larger corporations to run their farms certain ways or by having to buy large commodities in. So I think that the smaller farms are really at the forefront of the sustainable and regenerative agricultural movement.

You were talking about regenerate, and regenerative farming is something brought up a lot. What does that mean? So we like to look at it, it's a mindset.

you really want to put more in than take out. So you want look improving it. Look at your soil health. planning for the future, and you want to utilize your livestock to do that as much as possible.

So, you know, in more of a commercialized farm system you might bring in commercial fertilizer, which is a synthetic version, put it on your pastures.

If you're more of a regenerative farmer, you are going to look at, well, how can I use my cattle who are already fertilizing the pasture?

Regenerative Farming and Soil Health

How can graze them methodically to improve my soil health? that soil again. And so I think it's really a mindset and striving to do better. Using nature to feed us.

Leave it better than you found it, essentially. Awesome. How many cows do you have back here? So right now we

have about 500 head, but we only have 250 breed cows and we're calving those out right and the rest are going to be for our meat program.

So we are gonna be selling a lot of meat next year. Awesome. And you have a bunch of dogs on the property? Yes, we do have. Some are useless, some are useful.

Those are emotional dogs. Emotional support, no. But yeah. Any other dogs are out and about? What are they doing? They're with the herd and generally they're just surveying to see.

Sometimes neighbors let their dogs run free and right now we're calving so they are going to make sure those calves aren't getting messed with by any.

any dogs or coyotes or anything like that. So nice. There's gonna be people that have no idea what this kind of farming even is, right? Because you talked about going to grocery stores and easier.

What recommendations can you give to them? I know sometimes people say, oh, it's expensive to go to farmers. And how can we kind change that mentality and that mindset surrounding it?

Herd Size, Dogs, and Daily Farm Life

I think even just buying direct from farmers once or twice a year to begin with, just really opening that up and figuring out that it is worth spending that extra dollars on.

It might mean that you have to be a little more conscientious about what food you're wasting in your household. We waste 40% of in the traditional American household, so it's significant.

So maybe just be a little bit more mindful about how you're eating. And I think there are ways that you can incorporate it and still have it be sustainable financially for you.

Cool. Anything else you want to add about farming, about your life, how it has been going? I know you've been in here almost four years, we were saying.

What have you learned? Well, I've learned that I have been humbled many times. So I think everyone has become very far removed from agriculture that they don't understand what it takes to actually bring a steak to your table.

That's nearly two years for us. And we'll see cattle die throughout that time. You're always going to have a small percentage that aren't going Mom having a hard labor, you're going to have to deal with freak accidents.

You're gonna have do with drought. I'm gonna to to with wet, rainy weather in the wintertime. So I think a lot of us farmers, we really aren't making a huge profit off of farming and it really is a labor of love.

Why Support Local Farmers

Awesome. What originally drove you to seek local, more regenerative type forms? Well, it wasn't until I got to Georgia, and I've been here about three years now, I went to the Piggly Wiggly and got some meat.

And it was, the color was very different. I saw it and it didn't taste great. It was chewy. The meats that I'd got, couldn't really eat it or enjoy it.

Just felt like I was trying to shovel in nutrients and probably wasn' very nutritious. And so I started getting really into nutrition. And as an orthopedic surgeon, One of the big things I talk about with my patients is nutrition, because a lot of people eat a lots of really processed, terrible junk, and then their joints are inflamed.

And they come to me and saying, my knee hurts. They're obese. Eating processed foods, eating really poor meat quality. I started looking at all this and I was like, there's got to be a better way to get this food.

We have to stop eating so much packaged food that has a shelf life of 20 years, right? That's terrible. And one of my patients actually was like, you should try a farm in Columbus.

So I was, all right, I go and train Jiu-Jitsu there, so let's go. I met them and they took me on a tour of the farm. They're out there hugging the pigs.

It was an amazing experience to see how they take care of animals. And I was like, I don't think that these other grocery stores are doing this with their animals.

Dr. Jimenez on Nutrition and Sourcing Meat

Like it's family, right? And they had a great life with minimum stress. I saw how they move them and it was just so natural. It's like a flowing river.

Just very natural how the move the animals and I tried that meat and just looking at the color difference and then I just tried a little bit and started getting into organs and finding out all the nutrients of liver, heart.

I tried kidney. That one was a little bit extra for me. It was just taking out the filtration system of the kidney, so I stick to heart and liver pretty much, but the nutrients in that are just insane when I started looking at the benefits of it.

So that was it, I was hooked. And then anytime I eat at a grocery store or get from certain grocery stores, i'm like, And I have my friend who has chickens, treats them like family.

I go play with the chickens and they're like pets. But they eat well and that's where I get my eggs from. And so it was just a huge, I feel more energized.

So much better when I eat it. Like I don't feel like I want to go take a nap after I've eaten. these beautiful places from all the love that you give the animals and it just that energy comes through and then I I can go kick some ass and jujitsu.

Yeah do you think that sourcing your food locally and actually visiting these farms has helped you kind of reconnect to your foods and find it almost more enjoyable to eat it and and cook it more be more conscientious about you know how you're eating and what you are wasting?

100% because I come here and I get all my meat and i have friends over and a family over. And it's so exciting for me to share it with them because I'm like this is from like Lily Hill farm.

My friend like took care of these cows like helped birth them and they had a great life. They had free roaming of the land and did whatever they wanted for their lives and then they're giving us nutrition.

Because they have such a good life, it is just like a beautiful circle of life that I am getting all that energy and nutrition versus Cows that are probably in like a little pen, fed synthetics, pumped with antibiotics.

I really don't know what is happening behind closed doors. But I can only imagine what those animals go through. And that energy isn't what I want in my body.

So I love just sharing it with my family, sharing with friends, and I get so excited to share the meat with them because I'm like, this is from the farm.

You're insane, but they taste it and they're like, that is the best filet I've ever had.

Benefits of Pasture-Raised Food

That's the flank steak I ever have. And it's just because of the whole process. I do think that raising them… out on pasture really makes a world of difference.

And there's little things that I really pick up on, like they scratch up against trees. It's a way that they can take care of their skin. If they're in a feedlot, they don't necessarily have that, or they'll put those broom things up that are just a plastic to mimic that.

They go and they seek certain areas of the dirt. We do give them mineral, but they lick up certain minerals in them that they can, you know, kind of help balance their systems.

And I think it's just really important for them to be able to practice their normal behaviors and then also us, honor them and give them as stress-free life as possible.

That's how nature intended it. Yeah. All right. So people that are looking to get into supporting local farmers and getting this great quality meat, how can they find you?

How can Well, we do sell all of our products online at lilyhillcattle.com. You can also follow us on Instagram to keep up to date with the farm and I share a lot about even the family dynamics and also how we raise our livestock.

Where to Find Lily Hill Cattle

And my Instagram handle is Lily Hill Cattle and yeah, so those are the best ways to get in contact with us. Cool. And she loves all the questions that you guys have.

If you have any questions about how the cattle are being raised or even a question that she might not know off the top of her head, we go and look for it.

Yeah. So this is my friend Avery. Go check her out and start feeding your body, fueling yourself for success. You know, get that love, Get the Cattle.

go out, meet your local farmers because they're all over the country and you can really find them if you do your research.