

# Meat Messenger

## North Dakota State Meat Inspection Program

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

November 2003

### State Inspection, Local Resources Keys to Wildrose Grocery Success



Staff at the Wildrose Grocery

Randy and Bonnie Walters credit the State Meat Inspection Program for the success of Wildrose Grocery.

“We wouldn’t be here right now if we hadn’t become a state inspected facility; that’s the big thing,” says Randy. “We needed something else – more options, more ways to market our product, different outlets.”

From its plant in Wildrose in Williams County, Wildrose Grocery, now supplies products, including their own Hosanna brand sausages, to 18 retail establishments on a weekly route throughout the north western part of the state. The plant also

regularly provides beef to a retail butcher shop in Williston, where it is cut and sold to customers or processed into the shop’s own sausage products.

“We also are selling more and more half and whole carcasses of both beef and swine,” Walters says. Almost all of this has happened since July 2002, when Wildrose Grocery was officially certified as a state slaughter/processing facility. The plant has been in operation since 1995.

The plant has four full-time and two part-time employees, who produce a wide variety of retail products under inspection and custom process beef, swine and deer. The plant has been very busy slaughtering locally raised beef and pork under inspection and making it into their own products, as well as selling whole and half carcasses.

“Using locally raised livestock to sell and to make our products has been very helpful in meeting our customers’ needs,” said Randy, “They like to see that, and it has helped increase our sales because our customers know where the product is coming from. We don’t use very much boxed meat anymore since coming under inspection.”

Walters would like to expand his facility and broaden sales through marketing and developing more products under the new poultry program.

“If we can add on to our existing facility and increase production, we could hire more employees and continue to produce a high quality, locally raised and produced product,” he says.

## **NIH Scientists Show Nitrite Improves Blood Flow**

*NIH News, November 3*

Scientists at the National Institutes of Health have determined that nitrite, a common small ion, or salt, in blood, can improve blood flow by opening blood vessels. This increases oxygen in the blood and makes it a potential new treatment for diseases such as high blood pressure, heart attacks, sickle cell disease, and leg vascular problems.

The study also describes a newly discovered function for the hemoglobin molecule itself, perhaps the most studied protein in human history. The new study demonstrates that when hemoglobin releases its oxygen in regions of the body with low oxygen (such as organs) or high metabolism, it can then convert nitrite to nitric oxide, which is known to dilate blood vessels. The article will be published in the December issue of *Nature Medicine* and was published in advance online November 2.

“The importance of this work is that no one considered this molecule to have any significant function and it is relatively abundant in the blood stream,” said Dr. Mark Gladwin, senior investigator in Critical Care Medicine, Department of the NIH Clinical Center and an author of the article. Nitrite levels have been shown to be low in patients with high blood pressure.

Gladwin and coauthor Dr. Richard Cannon III, in the Cardiovascular Branch of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, NIH, studied eighteen healthy volunteers who were enrolled in a physiological study. They were infused with sodium nitrite to determine whether nitrite affects blood flow. They showed that blood flow increased by 175 percent.

“We saw a huge improvement in blood flow,” said Gladwin. “Nitrite helps get more blood to regions of the body with low oxygen, such as kidneys, the heart, the brain and muscles. This has potential as a new therapy that was previously overlooked, said Gladwin. “It’s a powder sitting on the shelf and everyone has it.” However, he warns that at high concentrations it can be toxic and clinical trials, now in progress at NIH, are required to establish its clinical usefulness in various diseases.

Nitrite is present not only in blood, but in leafy green vegetables and hot dogs. A similar reaction of nitrite and myoglobin in red meat makes nitric oxide bind to myoglobin and explains the red color of meat on grocery store shelves. Further study will be needed to determine if dietary sources of nitrite affect blood flow and blood pressure.

Scientists from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, NIH, also participated in this study.

## **Single BSE-infected cow costs Canada \$2.5 billion**

*by Daniel Yovich for Meatingplace.com, November 19*

A study commissioned by the Canadian government shows Canada’s beef industry has lost an estimated \$2.5 billion since it detected its first and only case of mad cow disease six months ago, according to a new study obtained by *Reuters*.

The fallout from the May 20 discovery of a single Alberta cow infected with BSE “represents the greatest threat and shock the Canadian agricultural industry has ever experienced,” said the report, written by Serecon Management Consultants Inc. of Edmonton. “Cattle need to be culled, farmers may need to be moved out of the sector, and rural communities may need to face increased downsizing.”

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In early September, after a massive investigation of the Canadian beef industry turned up no other cases, U.S. officials opened the border to limited types of meat from young animals. U.S. officials have since proposed rules to allow cattle and more cuts of beef into the country — pending a 60-day period of public comment.

The new study, which assumes existing trade bans will continue until early 2004, said the beef industry has lost about \$800 million in meat exports.

For the U.S. beef industry, the months since Canada's beef sector crisis began in May have been good ones. As Canada's export-dependent beef industry faced a crisis of low income and market glut, American cattle producers saw stronger markets and soaring prices.

Meanwhile, American beef continued to pour into Canada unrestricted because of North American Free Trade Agreement rules. "Canada was unable to introduce an import ban policy on these products to help increase the domestic oversupply," the report said.

## **Record High Beef Prices Here to Stay - USDA**

*by Reuters, November 18*

American consumers shouldn't expect a break anytime soon from record high prices for prime rib, T-bone steaks and other beef products as U.S. supplies will remain tight for the next two years, the Agriculture Department said on Tuesday.

Strong consumer demand, a drought in the Plains region and a case of mad cow disease in Canada have created a perfect storm for U.S. cattle prices, which have skyrocketed above \$100 per hundred pounds. Last year, cattle prices hovered around \$60. This has had a domino effect on beef prices from wholesalers to retailers to consumers.

"Given the tight fed cattle supply situation, retail beef prices are likely to continue on a record-setting path as the higher prices are passed on to consumers," the USDA said in its monthly livestock outlook report. "The question is to what degree."

The average retail beef price in September was \$3.08 per pound, up from \$2.82 per pound last year, according to industry. The Labor Department said in its monthly report on U.S. consumer prices on Tuesday that food prices rose a sharp 0.6 percent in October, noting high beef prices as a key factor.

With ranchers sending as much cattle to market as possible, the USDA said U.S. beef production would not begin to expand until at least 2006. This year's calf crop was forecast at 38 million head, the smallest since 1951, the USDA said. "The loss of feeder cattle imports from Canada further tightens the supply situation," the USDA said. Canada normally ships 1 million head for U.S. slaughter.

The United States imposed a ban on all cattle imports from Canada in May after Canada reported a case of mad cow disease in Alberta. In October, the USDA proposed relaxing the ban. The USDA, which has allowed imports of some low-risk Canadian beef products, will begin drawing up a final rule on Canadian cattle after a 60-day public comment period on the proposal ends in early January.

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**What:** Great classes, exhibits and more  
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## Meat Messenger

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