

CARING FOR CREATION NEWS

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Agricultural practices are one of the more significant contributors to the environmental problems we face today. Issues such as water diversion, erosion, soil depletion, and chemical run-off affect us all, even though we may live far from the farm. There are healthier practices. No one person can change the tide. But, one decision at a time we can all make a contribution toward a healthier world. This month our own Jim McKnight talks about his decision to purchase organically produced meat.

As a child, not being fond of vegetables, I told my parents that I wanted to be a carnivore. I like meat; this I admit. I have been fortunate to know Mike and Theresa O'Brian: the proprietors of Providence Farms. The O'Brian's raise organic, grass fed beef as well as organic hogs, turkeys, and free range chickens. Mike has done extensive studying of farming practices of the 1800's and has applied this knowledge to successfully raise healthy, happy, chemical free livestock outside of Ferrville.

Several needs have been met in the decision to purchase beef, turkeys, and chickens from Providence Farms. Safety is a large concern in any food purchase. There is mad cow disease which comes from feed. Less dramatic is the practice of medicating animals to hasten growth and to cope with the variety of ailments that arise from keeping livestock in close, unsanitary quarters. Cows fed on diets high in corn often develop digestive ailments requiring use of antibiotics. The effects of various growth hormones and secondhand antibiotics isn't known, and although FDA approved, I would venture to guess that in the long run my family is better off without them.

A second need that has been met is that of kindness. We know how the animals that wind up on our table are raised. We see Mike treat his livestock with concern and compassion. He speaks to and treats them in a kindly manner. When it comes time for slaughter the animals are dispatched respectfully and humanely.

Finally, my need for integrity is met in supporting local business and its many benefits. Money from the operation stays in the community, animals and feed are not shipped vast distances saving on fuel and other resources. Mike's cattle are grass fed which means that there is little or no need to ship food for feeding. Much of the processing of the chickens is done by friends of Mike and Theresa encouraging community and fellowship. We often visit the farm as a family. It gives our children and ourselves an opportunity to stay in touch with where our food comes from. For more information on Providence Farms, feel free to contact Jim or Ann McKnight at mcjim@sbcglobal.net