



## **Small Bites**

August 27, 2008

### **Producer Biography: Weiser River Signature Beef LLC**

Victor Ward and Chris Leverenz Indian Valley, ID

Victor Ward and Chris Leverenz take pride in their company's Aged Beef. Weiser River Signature Beef, LLC includes the word "signature" as a representation of the company's strong ethics. Ward, Leverenz, and their coworkers know the background of every cow they raise, as well as the ethics of the people they buy cattle from. Their beef is all-natural, meaning it is produced without the use of hormones, antibiotics or growth enhancements. Also, their cattle are born, raised and produced entirely within Idaho, resulting in sustainable, "low mileage" beef, a rare find among US beef producers. However, the main reasons that Ward can claim, "Once people try it, they always come back," are Weiser River's feeding and ageing processes.

In the spring and summer Weiser River's cows are fed entirely on grass in Indian Valley, then they journey 110 miles south-west to Weiser for the colder months. The weather's better in Weiser in the winter, and the cows are more comfortable. They have fresh water and lots of room for feeding and living.

From November through January their feed consists of a very nutritious combination of locally grown chopped hay and corn silings (chopped corn stalks and ears), and starting in February they also get rolled corn in increasing amounts. The corn and hay is grown by producers Victor and Chris know personally, whose standards and practices fall under Weiser River's ethical standards.

The corn is genetically modified to be Roundup Resistant (meaning that it won't die when the surrounding weeds are sprayed with Roundup, a common herbicide.) There is a drastic difference, Victor explains, between herbicides, which are

meant to kill plants, and pesticides, which are meant to kill animals; a category in which humans are included. Or in Victor's words, "We are pests!"

There are never any pesticides used on the corn or grains that Weiser River's Cows eat, nor are there antibiotics, hormones or growth enhancements, all of which are man made and have a larger potential for damage to human health than genetically modified corn. Weiser River Signature Beef is the local, all natural alternative to large scale, grocery-store bought beef.

Once the cattle reach 1,250 lbs, (usually in June or July) they are processed in Nampa at Northwest Premium, and the beef begins the ageing process. Weiser River's beef is dry aged, which means that a carcass hangs in a cooler so air can access it for a minimum of fourteen, and an average of twenty-two days. This process increases tenderness and flavor, creating a product that some have stated to be the best they've tasted. After the beef is aged, it is portioned and wrapped into rib steaks, t-bones, top serloin steaks, cube steaks, roasts, and burger meat. They sell a beef bundle, which includes a fourth of all the cuts of beef, and they sell it in boxes that will fit into the top part of a freezer.

Ward and Leverenz strongly believe in locally grown foods and are proud to supply Idaho with local aged beef. They have never had a negative response to their products; in fact the word customers use most to describe their beef, is "Awesome." Weiser River Signature Beef currently has ground beef and beef bundles for sale online, if you would like to try their aged beef, or if you have any questions, Victor would love to answer them.

He can be reached by phone at 208-256-4496.

### **Imagine ...**

- + Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices
- + Working in support of the health of your local community food shed  
where energy stays local and supports our rural economy

