



# Local Harvest

Foodlink Waterloo Region • Issue 45 • December 2010

## Features

Local Farm Profile:  
Emerson Bowman

Fresh in Focus:  
Fowl Play: All About  
Chicken

Finding Chicken in  
Waterloo Region



**FOODLINK**  
P.O. Box 601  
St. Jacobs, ON  
NOB 2N0  
519-513-8998

[www.foodlink.ca](http://www.foodlink.ca)

**Local Harvest  
content, layout and  
editing:**

Anna Contini

Carmen Everest-Wahl

Wendy Koch

## Local Farm Profile: Emerson Bowman



Customers will find local food treasures year round at Emerson Bowman's on-farm store.



Emerson feeds his flock of White Rock free-range chickens.

It is hard to imagine a more idyllic setting for a local farm. Nestled in the heart of Mennonite country just west of Wallenstein, amongst a peaceful mosaic of fields and woodlots, is the Emerson Bowman farm. Apart from the physical beauty of this landscape, complete with rolling hills and stunning vistas, one is also struck by the diversification of this enterprising operation.

The 98-acre plot is home to Emerson Bowman, his sister Cathrine, the resident greenhouse expert, and their mother Lucinda. The farm has been in the family since 1930, originally run by Emerson's grandfather Elias and later by his father Menno, who passed away a decade ago.

The Bowman farm has always been somewhat diversified but in the early days dairy was the area of specialization. Once the family started selling summer sausage, increasingly, customers began requesting other cuts of beef, recounts Emerson. In response to this demand he built an on-farm store and also started to sell at the Elmira Farmers Market two years ago. Today the Bowman's impressive roster of local food offerings includes various beef cuts, deli meats, free

range chickens, graded eggs, in-season fruits (plums, pears, cherries and apples) as well as a range of greenhouse plants and perennials.

Emerson enjoys the challenge and diversity that goes along with juggling several different kinds of farming. He raises his own Holsteins and then gets them slaughtered along with some of his neighbour's cattle at LeRoy Martin's in Drayton. The beef is then processed at Homestyle Meats near Dorking. In addition to roasts, steaks and ground beef Emerson also offers his ever-popular summer sausage, fully cooked beef roll and bologna (made with 40% pork from Tanjo Family Farm). Customers can purchase deli meats either by the roll or sliced, while various beef cuts are generally sold frozen, the exception being immediately following slaughter when meat sold fresh for a limited time. All beef cuts are sold in convenient vacuum sealed packages.

Aside from his cattle operation, much of Emerson's time is devoted to raising chickens for both meat and eggs. His free-range chickens appear to have a very happy life with access to a lovely grassy patch just outside their coop. Emerson raises a breed called 'White



## Local Farm Profile continued

Rock' and acquires the chicks as day-old from Bonnie's Chick Hatchery in Elmira. The birds are full grown by 11-12 weeks and are anywhere from six to ten pounds each dressed. The birds are processed at Country Poultry Processing and available fresh for the first couple of days after slaughter and then frozen while quantities last. Emerson has noticed a big demand for free-range chicken and plans to pump up production even further next year.

In addition to the meat birds, Emerson also has approximately 500 free-run laying hens, which produce some 500 eggs per day! As the hens get older their productivity decreases and they are generally relegated to 'soup hens' explains Emerson. Just this fall he began getting all of his eggs graded so that they could be sold at market. The term 'free run' means that the birds can roam freely throughout their facility with access to their nesting boxes rather than being confined to cages. The chickens are fed a diet consisting primarily of grains (corn, soya, wheat) and a protein-mineral supplement. Their feed comes from the Wallenstein Feed & Supply just down the road. Chickens are not given hormones; in fact hormones are not available in Canada and their use is illegal.

Produce is yet another branch of farming at

Emerson Bowman's. Several types of fruit are grown including cherries, plums, pears and apples. Some years, when the supply has been adequate, Emerson has sold his fruit at the Wallenstein General Store. Emerson's sister Catharine runs the greenhouse operation and sells a variety of plants, perennials and cut flowers in season.

Emerson Bowman can be found at the Elmira Farmers Market from the beginning of May to the end of October and hopes to soon be selling at the new indoor Elora Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. He has noticed a definite shift in the local food movement with more and more customers asking questions about where the food comes from and how it was grown. Emerson is new to Foodlink's *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map this year and has already noticed people coming to his farm store from further afield. His friendly, easy going nature makes him a natural with customers.

Watch for the large sign on Highway 86 alerting customers to some of the weekly treasures that can be found at the end of the long lane-way. The tidy on-farm store is open year round offering a selection of meats, eggs and fruits. And there's no extra charge for taking in the beautiful view out back! ♦



Emerson's 500 laying hens are free-run and yield approximately one egg per day.



White Rock Chickens are raised for their meat. The free-range birds are processed locally at Country Poultry Processing.



## Finding Chicken in Waterloo Region

Here are some of the many farms in Waterloo Region that raise and sell chickens. For a detailed listing pick up a copy of Foodlink's 2010 *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map.



**Faul Farms**  
1180 Wrigley Road, Ayr  
519-632-7678 | [www.faulfarms.com](http://www.faulfarms.com)



**Unfactory Farm**  
5415 Streicher Line, Crosshill  
519-656-2691



**Top Market Rabbitry**  
5887 Splint Road, Ariss  
519-716-9464



**Oakridge Acres**  
2132 Greenfield Road, Ayr  
519-632-7653 | [www.oakridgeacres.ca](http://www.oakridgeacres.ca)



**Baer's Vibrant Farms**  
2669 Carmel Koch Road, Baden  
226-808-2237 | [www.vibrantfarms.com](http://www.vibrantfarms.com)



**Hilltop Acres Poultry**  
1501 Maple Bend Road, Breslau  
519-743-6884  
[www.hilltoppoultryproducts.com](http://www.hilltoppoultryproducts.com)



**Shadynook Farms**  
1784 Northumberland St. Ayr  
519-696-3060 | [www.shadynook.ca](http://www.shadynook.ca)



**Rolling Acres**  
1235 Martin Creek Road, St. Jacobs  
519-664-1337



**Snyder Heritage Farms**  
1213 Maple Bend Road, Breslau  
519-741-1447  
[www.snyderheritagefarms.com](http://www.snyderheritagefarms.com)



**Emerson Bowman**  
7480 Line 86, Wallenstein  
519-698-2305



**Horst Family Farm**  
6359 Middlebrook Road, West Montrose  
519-669-8203



**Winroe Gardens**  
221 Katherine St. North  
Winterbourne  
519-664-0556



**Gerber Meats**  
2513 Greenwood Hill Road, Millbank  
519-699-4441



## Fowl Play: All About Chicken

The age old dilemma of which came first...the chicken or the egg...has now been solved. And, according to newly published research – it is neither! A new family tree based on protein sequences recovered from a Tyrannosaurus rex femur bone in 2007 suggests that dinosaurs are the early progenitors of the avian world and that these ancient creatures really came first. While similar bone structures have always linked the prehistoric archaeopteryx to today's modern birds, researchers at Harvard Medical School may have finally supplied the molecular evidence.

Domesticated chickens (*Gallus domesticus*) first appeared around 6,000 years ago in Southeast Asia, eventually travelling to India and westward to Egypt and then Greece about 2,500 years ago. It was under the Roman Empire that Europeans began to breed chickens for meat and eggs. By the mid-1800s in Britain, the thrill of breeding chickens for their colourful plumage really took off, especially since Queen Victoria was such an ardent hobbyist herself.

Despite this, the first chickens did not arrive in the Americas with early European colonizers, but instead likely came with Asian explorers to the South American coast over 3000 years ago. The evidence for early pan-Pacific trade comes from the native Chilean Araucana chicken, which lays blue-shelled eggs, and has a similar DNA to early Polynesian varieties.

### A Whole Lot of Birds

Around the world today, over 50 billion chickens are raised annually to satisfy our appetite for meat and eggs. That's more chickens than people. Here in Ontario, that equates to about 205 million meat birds and almost 10 million Layers (and consequently almost 3 billion eggs!). Waterloo Region itself is home to around 90 poultry and egg farms that raise approximately 2.5 million birds every year.



**Now taking orders for your holiday bird!**  
Naturally raised turkeys, chicken roasters and pieces.  
GMO, Drug Free, no animal by-products

**Kevin & Anne Snyder**  
1213 Maple Bend Rd, Breslau  
519-741-1447 | [www.snyderheritagefarms.com](http://www.snyderheritagefarms.com)

Meat birds, or *broilers*, are mainly descended from just a few lines in Ontario – the White Plymouth Rock (American origins) and White Cornish (from Cornwall, England) being the most popular due to their hardiness and large size. Day old chicks are transported from hatcheries to farms, where they are housed and fed until ready for market within seven to eight weeks.

Hens raised to produce eggs, or *layers*, are most often breeds capable of laying approximately one egg a day. The two most popular commercial layers are the White Leghorn (producing white eggs) and the Rhode Island Red (with brown eggs). Hens typically begin laying at around 20 weeks old and, under optimum living conditions, will produce at least 300 eggs before production begins to cease at around 18 months.

### Bred for the Cold

The oldest chicken breed of Canadian origin is the Chantecler, first bred in 1908 as a general purpose bird meant to provide meat and eggs in a more extreme climate. Brother Wilfred, an enterprising monk at the Cistercian Trappist Monastery in Oka Quebec, realized in

1908 that all the chickens in their poultry yard were either from American or European breeding stock. Yearning for a truly Canadian breed that could withstand the rigours of a northern climate, Brother Wilfred began to cross various breeds to produce a bird with frost resistant combs and wattles. He also chose to cross breeds that would yield hens with both excellent egg production and meat qualities. By 1918, Brother Wilfred had succeeded in creating the White Chantecler, a large white chicken with small comb and wattle that lays light brown eggs. The Chantecler was officially declared a breed in 1921.

It wasn't very long ago that a nice roasted chicken was reserved for Sunday dinner, with all the family in attendance. Today, chicken is often served



**WINROE GARDENS**  
**COUNTRY MARKET**

**Let us do your holiday baking!**  
Christmas cookies, squares, pies, fruit cakes  
Fresh baked rolls & bread  
Custom cheese & meat platters  
Gift Baskets

**221 Katherine St. N. Winterbourne**  
**519-664-0556**



*continued from page 3*

several times a week, due in part to its convenience and high quality protein. A skinless, 100g chicken breast provides 160 calories, 33g protein, 2.1g fat, is very high in niacin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12 and phosphorus and a good source of zinc, magnesium, and pantothenic acid. While almost two thirds of the fat content is found in the skin, it is best to leave it on while cooking to keep the meat moist and tender.

Eggs have always been a nutritious, low cost means of providing protein in the diet. With 6g of protein in a large egg and only 70 calories, there are a number of other important nutrients not listed on the label. Lutein and zeaxanthin, for instance, are antioxidants that protect against

macular degeneration and heart disease. One egg also provides half the daily requirement of choline, a nutrient that has been shown to play a strong role in brain development and function.

In the end, is it really important which came first – the chicken or the egg? For all the omnivores amongst us, we are simply grateful that both are available to nourish our bodies. And, don't forget about those chicken bones – simmered for two to three hours with some onion, celery, carrots and peppercorns yields a delicious and healthy stock suitable for use in any soup or rice dish. ♦

• Breakfast • Lunch •  
• Homemade Desserts • Take Out •

Mon-Sat: 8am-4:30pm\*  
**Cafe & Gift Shop**  
Early 1900's General Store  
519.669.2142  
2238 Floradale Rd, Floradale, Ontario  
\*Extended hours on Friday starting in the spring

**Fun Fact:** Alektorophobia is the name given to "The Fear of Chickens."

## Moroccan Chicken With Apples



*This easy recipe features tender chicken pieces lightly seasoned and quickly poached with apples in chicken broth. You don't even need to peel the apples, the red skin provides both colour and fibre. Serve with cooked rice or couscous and sliced cucumbers and tomatoes.*

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 15 minutes

**Servings:** 4

### What you will need:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 4 skinless boneless Ontario Chicken Breasts (about 1 lb/500 g) | 1 tsp (5 mL) cornstarch                                  |
| 1 tsp (5 mL) ground cumin                                      | 2 tsp (10 mL) vegetable oil                              |
| 1/2 tsp (2 mL) chili powder                                    | 1 onion, chopped   |
| 1/4 tsp (1 mL) cinnamon  | 1 clove garlic, minced                                   |
| pinch each of salt and pepper                                  | 1 tbsp (15 mL) minced fresh gingerroot                   |
| 2 Ontario Apples   | 3/4 cup (175 mL) undiluted canned low-salt chicken broth |
| 3 tbsp (45 mL) lemon juice                                     | 2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh parsley                     |

### Method:

Trim excess fat from chicken breasts. Combine cumin, chilli powder, cinnamon, salt and pepper; spread evenly on chicken breasts. Set aside. Core and slice apples into thin wedges; toss in lemon juice. Set aside. In small bowl, combine cornstarch and 2 tsp (10 mL) cold water; set aside.

Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add onion, garlic and ginger; stir-fry until onions are slightly softened, about 3 minutes.

Add chicken breasts; brown lightly on both sides. Pour broth over chicken and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, until chicken is almost cooked, about 4 minutes.

Add apples and lemon juice to chicken, cover and cook until apples are tender but not mushy and chicken is no longer pink inside, about 2 minutes. With slotted spoon, remove chicken and apples to warm plates.

Stir cornstarch mixture and stir into liquid in pan; cook over high heat until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Pour over chicken. Sprinkle with parsley.

*Source: From Foodland Ontario Website*