

Flavor Matters

The May 2016 issue of the The Grass Farmer under “Allan’s Observations” offers some fascinating insight on the importance of flavor in our diets. The observations were influenced by a book written by Mark Schatzker called *The Dorito Effect*. Here are a few quotes from the article.

“Flavor matters, because a high level of innate flavor indicates a high level of nutrition. Consequently, all animals, including humans are genetically programmed to seek out foods with high levels of flavor.”

“Highly flavored food creates satiety, that feeling of fullness that naturally keeps us from over-eating and becoming obese. Bland foods cause us to overeat as we seek more flavor satisfaction.”

“One reason this flavor decline has been largely unnoticed is due to the widespread use of chemical food flavorings. These chemicals fool us into thinking we are eating food that is nutritious when it actually isn’t. Also, unlike real food flavor, the chemical flavors occur in a short burst and quickly fade similar to the flavor-fade of chewing gum. This causes us to eat more to obtain another flavor burst.

“Seventy-five years ago, **chicken meat** came from the largely unwanted male chicken of laying hens. Flavorful Broilers were tiny and weighed just a pound and a half but were so tender they could be cooked under a broiler and not become tough. Chicken meat was largely a by-product of egg production and was mostly done on a small scale. One-hundred hens was a large operation and chicken meat was a luxury product. Beef ruled the roost before Pearl Harbor as it was far cheaper (and larger quantity) than chicken.” Later, meat chickens were bred to grow bigger and faster to provide that promised ‘chicken in every pot’ by politicians.

“As animals are bred to grow faster, die younger and bigger, their innate flavor gets diluted.” However, Europeans prefer older (more flavorful) animals and “chickens are bred to grow slower taking up to 84 days to mature, while Americans do it in half the time. The French prefer their beef to be from five-year old cows or four-year old steers. British lambs are not harvested until they reach a full year.

“Americans are currently being fed 190 million pounds of MSG and other **meat flavorings** each year to put some flavor into grain-feed beef.”

Perhaps you have noticed the ever increasing selection of steak and BBQ sauces available today in the supermarkets. However, we seldom find a need for them when dining on the more flavorful grass-finished beef.

“The anti-grass-fed propagandists are currently attacking the health claims of grass-finished beef **based upon** the small amount of CLA and Omega-3 in a typical (grain-fed) steer. And yet, it is the eating of small amounts of healthful things over a lifetime that is the heart of preventative medicine.”

Schatzker recommends grass-fed beef “from animals that are least 22 months old”. The grass-finished beef from **Twin Brook Camillus Farm** is normally 30 months old.

“Be aware that ‘industrial organic’ foods from modern animal breeds are not capable of being delicious. An organic label does not mean that the food will taste better or be better for you. Rely on flavor more than labels.”
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“Each grass, legume, and forage concentrates different minerals; and soil minerals are a big part of grass-fed meat flavor. Of the minerals, calcium, which imparts a sweet flavor to the grass and thereby to the meat, is probably the most important.”

No wonder the old farmer was often seen with a stalk of grass in his mouth as he was testing the grass for grazing. The stony ground on **Twin Brook Camillus Farm** creates high PH soils that internally nourish the multiple species of grasses, legumes and herbs. The nutrition of the grasses flavor the meat. Ranged hens eating these grasses lay flavorful dark-yolk eggs that do not need salt added in the cooking process.

Doctors say we need less salt in our diets. We need more flavor in our food!