



Free-range chickens at Seven Sons' partner, Gunthorp Farms.

Free Range

For years, Lee and Beth Hitzfield ran their family farm in the conventional way (row crops and a confinement hog operation) and sold their products to big food corporations like Tyson Foods.

When, in the early 1990s, their growing family—yes, they really do have seven sons—encountered a health issue, the Hitzfields embarked on an educational journey. How may the industrial food-system be affecting the health and well being of consumers? They grew more convinced that the prevailing approach to food production resulted in

low nutrition and poor-tasting food that was contributing to the rise of poor health, obesity and chronic diseases in the general population.

"We believe that every person should take personal responsibility for his or her own health and the health of his/her family by learning and observing the positive and negative effects that food has on the human body and take the necessary steps to secure healthy sources of nourishing foods," said Lee Hitzfield.

continued on page 51

continued from page 49

A fundamental part of this equation is how farms manage the soil, plants and animals in their care. When the Hitzfields discovered the direct effect these practices have on the health of consumers, they became fully committed to producing the most nourishing foods using the healthiest sources and practices.

They decided to transition their farming practices to align with this philosophy, and by 2000, **Seven Sons Farms** was born. With the mission of producing nutrient-dense foods that heal and nourish our land and those who eat its bounty, the farm now produces 100 percent grass-fed beef, pasture-raised pork, free-range poultry and eggs and cheese that comes from their animals. They use no hormones, antibiotics or GMOs in the raising of their livestock. Seven Sons is also committed to farming practices that regenerate, rather than deplete, the land.

When Seven Sons found its approach to be very popular—its regular delivery area covers Indiana, the greater Chicago area and

metropolitan areas in Kentucky and Michigan—it began to partner with other similarly-minded farms and artisans to offer a wider range of products. Partners include: **Gunthorp Farms** (you'll see their pastured pigs, chicken and ducks at fine restaurants all over the Midwest), **Hartzler Family Dairy** (a family farm committed since the mid-60s to using no chemical pesticides, herbicides or artificial growth hormones), **Wild Alaska Salmon & Seafood Co.** (handles and ships sustainably-caught fish carefully and quickly), **Milled & More** (providing freshly-milled ancient grains and heirloom wheat) and many others.

Seven Sons' products—and those of their partner farms—can be ordered through sevensons.net, where you'll find instructions on local pick-up locations and times; or, for an additional \$9, you can request home delivery. Also, the Seven Sons retail store, 15718 Aboite Road, Roanoke is open 9 am–3pm on Saturdays. Local stores that stock many of its products: 3 Rivers Food Co-op, Earth Fare, Joseph's Herbs & Vitamins and Nolt's Marketplace.

—Beth Behrendt

Pigs in the pasture—raised without hormones, antibiotics or GMOs.



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