

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 “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 human animals, 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 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. 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 byproduct 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 than chicken.

“As animals are bred to grow faster, die younger and bigger, their innate flavor gets diluted.” However Europeans prefer older animals. “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 as I have, the ever increasing selection of steak and BBQ sauces available today in the super markets. However we seldom find a need for them when dining on grass finished beef.

“The anti-grass fed propagandists are currently attacking our health claims based upon the small amount of CLA and omega-3 in a typical steak. And yet. It is the eating small amounts of healthful things over lifetime that is the heart of preventative medicine.”

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

“Be aware that ‘industrial organic’ foods from modern varieties (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.”

“Each grass, legume and for concentrates different minerals, and soil minerals are a being part to 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 farmers were often seen with a piece of grass in their mouth. They were testing the grass for grazing. The stony ground on our farm is probably producing the high PH soils that naturally nourishes the multiple species of grasses, legumes, and herbs.