

## GLBGA 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

Great Lakes Belted Galloway Association held their May 30-31 annual meeting and Beltie tour in the big cheese state of Wisconsin and attendees had a grand time. The event was featured on the front page of *The Country Today*, a mainstream Wisconsin weekly ag publication.

After the GLBGA annual meeting, a bus tour began at Wisconsin River Farm owned by John and Diane Hamm and family of rural Mauston. Guests enjoyed being photographed by the very large Belted Galloway bull at the entrance of the farm. The farm established in 1936 by Louis Hamm (John's grandfather) began raising Belted Galloway cattle in 1995 when son, Kyle, purchased a Belted Galloway steer for his 4-H project. They were impressed by the steer's carcass and purchased more animals to establishing their herd. Guests enjoyed wagon rides around Wisconsin River Farm viewing cattle and the farm gardens. Tours of the family business, Wisconsin River Meats were given, learning about the carcass evaluation of 4 Belted Galloway grassfed and grainfed hanging carcasses. Wisconsin River Meats processed a side of Belted Galloway beef and further explained the cuts, marbling, grading, hanging time, and wrapping for optimum storage. The Wisconsin River Meats store was open and guests enjoyed product samples. The store offers a variety of fresh meat, sausages (their specialty Landjaeger sausage), grilling products, Wisconsin cheeses and butter, fresh baked pies, and of course, a meat case exclusively for Belted Galloway beef. The business serves retail, custom processing and wholesale customers throughout Wisconsin and products are sold online at their virtual store. After a catered lunch by Wisconsin River Meats, the bus was off to Milladore.

Milladore, WI is the home of Michael and Lorna Caldwell of Caldwell Farms. In 2003, the farm became certified organic and now is home to approximately 200 Belted Galloway cattle. Caldwell Farms cattle are strictly grassfed and rotationally grazed. A large portion of the herd was purchased from John Jeffords of Wyoming, providing an imported genetic base of cattle very similar to those still found in Scotland. Caldwell Farms direct market certified organic grass-fed Belted Galloway beef to health food groceries, restaurants, personal chefs, and maintain their own online butcher shop. Caldwell Farms spent two years developing their brand of summer sausage with the expertise of Pete's Meat Service, LLC in Rudolph. It was a magnificent view from the bus with over 200+ black or dun animals grazing in the lush Wisconsin pastures. The Caldwell herd will begin calving soon, with 70 expected to be born in July. Michael Caldwell gave an overview of the farm including the certified organic process and standards they must follow to maintain. The Caldwell's keep extensive records regarding their herd, which includes DNA, tenderness and production data. All of the bulls used at Caldwell Farms are designated a 6 to 10 on a tenderness scale of 10. Caldwell presented in brief, the nutritional analysis conducted by the Belted Galloway Foundation regarding Belted Galloway beef. Guests munched on samples of Caldwell Farms Beltie Beef summer sausage, Wisconsin cheese, and Kolache (a Bohemian pastry). Tours of the farms' cattle handling facility and pastures were given. Guests boarded the bus and they returned to Mauston for a steak fry hosted by Wisconsin River Farm, silent auction, and socializing.

Sunday morning the group traveled to rural Tomah, WI; the home of Whirling Thunder Ranch owned by the Ho Chunk Indian Nation. The GLBGA was greeted by Director of Public Relations Anne Thundercloud, President Wilbert Cleveland and Administrative Assistant Lois Behrens all of the Ho Chunk Nation. President Cleveland explained that the Ho Chunk Nation owns various lands and businesses throughout the United States. The Ho Chunk nation has 6000 members who do not reside on reservations. The Ho Chunk Nation has its own government and laws, including a judicial court. Guests enjoyed a beginning drum ceremony honoring the American flag. Ranch manager Bill Holpenkah, formerly from New Mexico, explained he has spent the past 7 years establishing the beef herd and business for the Ho Chunk Nation. Whirling Thunder Ranch is comprised of 386 acres of rolling vistas and fields including 67 Belted Galloways. Their original stock was purchased from Caldwell Farms. They are certified organic and totally grassfed with 202 acres in hay production. The ranch reached the certified organic designation in January 2008. Whirling Thunder is expecting 28 calves throughout the summer and fall. Guests toured the ranch, viewing replacement heifers, the bull pen and brood cows. The tour ended with a song and drum ceremony giving thanks and lunch was served.