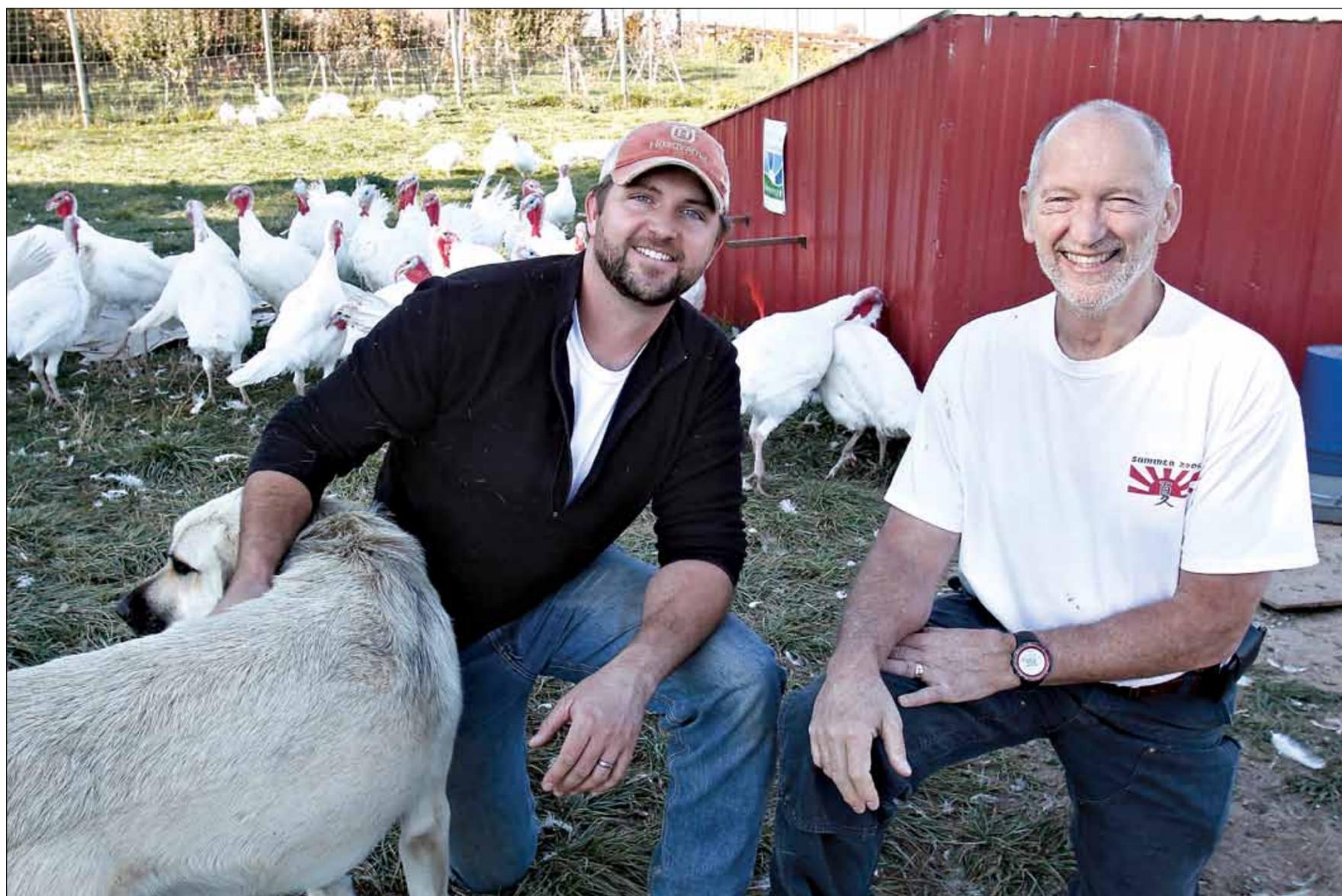


A historic Thanksgiving flavor



Photos by ANDY SAWYER/Yakima Herald-Republic

Bradley Newhall and his father, Greg Newhall, pose with some of the turkeys they are raising at Windy N Ranch outside Ellensburg on Oct. 24. The Newhalls raised 65 of the White Holland Heritage turkeys this season.

White Holland Heritage turkeys first came to North America in the 1500s, and thanks to Windy N Ranch, they can still star on your holiday table

BY SAVANNAH TRANCHELL
YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

ELENSBURG — On a sunny fall day on Windy N Ranch, a turkey is outside its enclosure.

And it's not happy about it. The white-feathered fowl runs along the fence line, occasionally running into the wire, attempting to get back in with its friends.

It happens a lot: One of Greg Newhall's 65 organically raised heritage-breed turkeys will end up on top of one of their metal shelters, and then — plop! — over the fence it goes. But the thing cannot figure out how to get back inside.

"They are so stupid," Newhall says, laughing, as the bird is caught and lifted back into its pasture.

In his fourth year raising turkeys, Newhall is continually amazed at the stupidity of his flock. He's seen them die in any number of ways, and lost five earlier this season when the young birds got stuck between a wall and a watering tank. Apparently, one after another had followed the calls of their distressed fellow into the space and

Windy N Ranch

- 3650 Passmore Road, Ellensburg
- Sells grassfed Wagyu-Angus beef cross, organic pastured pigs, grassfed lamb and goat, heritage turkeys, Freedom Ranger fryer chickens, stewing hens and brown eggs. Most animals are sold out for the year, but ground beef is available by the pound, and eggs and frozen chickens are still available.
- For information on prices and ordering for the 2014 season, go to www.windy nranch.com or call 509-962-4873.

gotten stuck themselves. "It was like a Jim Jones suicide pact," Newhall says of finding the birds the next day.

Newhall is a former builder who got into ranching in the past decade and has followed a steep learning curve to develop his business, which raises sheep, pigs, goats, cattle, chicken and turkeys on 800 acres for meat and eggs. His pastures received organic certification this year, Newhall says, so all of the animals born next spring will also be certified. Pigs have been since 2011.

Newhall hopes to be a one-stop shop for organic meats, which is why he added turkeys to his lineup four years ago. When he

originally decided to start raising turkeys, Newhall planned to just go a "natural" route — raising healthy birds that were free of hormones but missing the official organic certification. But it became clear to him that the label was too confusing for the public, so he pursued the official title. "Organic is nice and clean," he says. "It's a standard that people understand. ... It's very difficult to obtain."

The White Holland Heritage turkeys Windy N Ranch is raising this year sell for \$5.95 a pound, and Newhall has already sold out of his birds for the 2013 holiday season. He gets orders as early as January for the following year.

This year, he started out with 150 birds, but lost about half to owls, which flew in at night and snatched the young turkeys. Next year, he plans on putting up some netting over the turkey pasture to deter flying predators.

"The owls just decimated us," Newhall says. "To lose more than half is a disaster."

The turkeys — which are bought as chicks — are harvested between 25 and 28 weeks old and should reach between 8 and 15 pounds apiece, slightly smaller than Newhall was hoping for. But because his turkeys are raised on pasture and allowed to freely move about, they don't fatten up like commercially raised birds.

"It's difficult to get that (size) without confining them," says Bradley Newhall, Greg's son, who also works on the ranch.

In addition to pasture and the bugs available naturally to eat, the turkeys receive crushed grain feed, but they tend to eat less because they are wandering around, Greg Newhall says.

This is the second year that Newhall has raised the White Holland Heritage breed. In previous years,

he tried raising a dark-feathered heritage turkey, but the plucked birds were cosmetically less appealing because the dark feathers left spots on the flesh. The White Holland was brought to the U.S. from Mexico in the 1500s, according to Newhall's website. They take twice as long to grow as commercial birds and end up about half the size, but Newhall says the heritage breeds have a richer flavor.

"It has more depth of flavor," he says. "It just tastes more like turkey."

The birds cook at the same temperature as traditional turkeys but will cook faster.

The turkeys are butchered on site at Windy N Ranch in Newhall's USDA-certified butchering facility. Half of the remaining flock went to slaughter this week and will be frozen to fulfill orders for customers in Western Washington. The remaining birds will be slaughtered Nov. 25 to be picked up by local customers.

Becoming a rancher was never his life's intention, and Newhall learns as he goes, turning to experts when he enters a new area.

"I've got a mentor for

Online

- See a video from Windy N Ranch at yakimaherald.com.
- Want to know where you can buy holiday birds? Check the Appetite blog, where we'll be compiling a list of local producers. yakimaherald.com/blogs/appetite.

each animal," he says. "I'm not a specialist, but I go to a specialist."

In addition to the meat, the Newhalls have a small herd of "guardian dogs" that protect the animals from predators. The large animals are three-quarters Anatolian Shepherd and one-quarter Great Pyrenees. They roam the ranch, being friendly with the free-range chickens, the turkeys and the growing flock of peafowl.

It may not be where he thought his life would end up, but Newhall is happy with his ranch.

"This just feels good," Newhall says. "It's a gorgeous lifestyle."

Even if some of his flock is a little dim.

MADE IN THE VALLEY

Rill Specialty Foods



On this week's episode of **Made in the Valley**, we take a trip to **Rill Specialty Foods** in Thorp to see how they produce their dried soup mixes. The company, which was started in 1995 by owner Ninon Wheatley, began in a restaurant and grocery store. Watch the episode at yakimaherald.com/madeinthevalley.



WINE OF THE WEEK



Winery: Daven Lore Winery 2011 Tempranillo, Snipes Mountain
Price: \$28

About: Carries a theme of high-toned red fruit of red currant, Van cherry and strawberry/rhubarb compote.

Provided by GreatNorthwestWine.com