

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

It's hard to believe but the outdoor season of the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair has only one Saturday remaining, before we move indoors to the Armoury Building at 89 Mosely Street, the second Saturday of each month, from November to April. We have had a wonderful and busy season and we were fortunate to have experienced few Saturdays of inclement weather this year. By the time the colder weather of October rolls around, we are usually ready to relocate indoors.

The last biography of the season belongs to the Abbott Family Farm, operated by Christine and Warren Abbott and located just north of Stouffville. The family includes four children, three grandchildren, four sponsored children and three border collies.

Warren grew up and attended school in Markham, always dreaming of owning a farm and raising cattle. Christine grew up on a farm in Whitchurch-Stouffville where her family raised cattle and horses, as well as cash crops.

She attended high school in Aurora and worked at a nursing home here too. In her spare time she participated in the farm club known as 4-H, where she became a leader.

In the late 1970's, Warren bought a 32 acre farm near Uxbridge where he had a few cattle, some cash crops, hay and some older equipment. Then Warren and Christine met at church, married and she moved to Warren's small farm. Soon, however, their herd grew larger and they needed to relocate. They bought a 100 acre farm in Zephyr where they continued with hay, cash crops and a cow/calving operation.

The herd grew in number and the family grew as well with the addition of three children. A few years later, they relocated again to a farm in Whitchurch-Stouffville where they raise 100 head of cattle. Soon after, their fourth child was born and they had a team to help on the farm.

Their cattle are raised on a diet of grass and hay as well as mineral and salt. They do not use any hormones. Their beef tastes, smells and cooks differently from that raised in a commercial feed lot. While it may require a period of adjustment, it is considered by many to be a healthier alternative.

They have a meat store on the farm which is open all year, even in off market season. This is their first season at the Aurora Farmers' Market and we are delighted that they decided to join us.

They will be participating in the indoor season at the Armoury as well. I encourage you to stop by their booth this Saturday or during the indoor market to talk about their delicious beef and to buy some to taste.

As mentioned, Saturday October 31 is our last day outdoors. As it coincides with Hallowe'en, we are encouraging vendors to wear costumes and will have Hallowe'en treats for customers. We will have prizes for children wearing costumes and there will be music at the bandshell and zombie dancing at 11.30 a.m.

We will also have the usual pumpkin carving contest among the vendors where customers are encouraged to cast votes for their favourite pumpkin. We've planned all kinds of fun activities to end the season with a bang so be sure to include the Market in your Saturday plans.

Now that we're approaching the end of our 2015 season, the Farmers' Market Committee and all the vendors would like to thank our wonderful and generous sponsors who helped make this season so successful. Your support enabled us to have exciting entertainment throughout the season as well as allowing us to advertise many of our special events.

We are incredibly grateful to you all and look forward to working with you again. Starting with our two platinum sponsors, Highland Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac and Snapd Aurora, we wish to also thank Lighthouse Chiropractic, Aurora Fit Body Boot camp, Beverley Varcoe of Royal LePage, Aurora Home Hardware, Beck Financial, Marion Carcone Real Estate, the Optimist Club of Aurora, Resting Rock Landscape, The Rotary Club of Aurora, Millionaire's Daughter, King Richard's Pub, The Lucy Maud Montgomery Society, Envy Heating and Air Conditioning and Irina's French Lessons.

See you at the Market!