

## Homestead Farms: healthy living at its finest

Written by Chris Lee

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Natural, old-fashioned, respectful, great care, love and herd health. All words used on a farm where the animals are number one. Travis and Tawnina Uptain are the owners/operators of Homestead Farms, located about six miles south and six miles west of Holyoke.

Coming from the Durango area, Tawnina and Travis knew something better was in store for their family.

“We were living such a fast-paced life and weren’t happy with it,” Tawnina said. “It just happened for us.”

Six years ago, the couple went driving around the state looking for land because they knew they wanted to do something related to agriculture. They ended up at their current home just over a year ago and decided to begin Homestead Farms. Their three sons, Morrgan, 6, Wyatt, 5 and Warren, 2, enjoy running around the farm helping with the animals and chores.

Tawnina said they began raising the animals before moving to the Holyoke area. Beginning with chickens they then added goats and hogs. About two months ago the Homestead Farms name was born.

The nine-acre farm is home to hybrid hogs, Jersey and Milking shorthorns, as well as different varieties of chickens including Silver Laced Wyandottes, Dark Cornish, Partridge Rocks and White Rocks. The Uptains also had a herd of Toggenburg goats which were sold recently.

They make different types of cheese, soaps, creams, butter, hard cheeses and cottage cheese. An Italian soft cheese, Mascarpone, used in tiramisu, is just one variety of cheese Tawnina makes.

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Tawnina said she also processes fiber and spins wool.

The chickens are truly free range chickens. They are in the yard almost always. The family's lab "Goose" keeps a close eye out for predators and they have only lost one chicken according to Travis.

The hogs drink excess milk and eat all natural feed. Tawnina said they are very lean and have an old fashioned taste.

The American Shorthorns are an endangered species and the Uptains would like to do all they can to keep the breed around.

As of now, there are three cows milked each day. Each cow produces around six gallons a day.

All of the things Tawnina produces are healthy, she said. All of the hard work for the business isn't just for providing milk and other foods to people, it is a benefit to their family as well. She also said the raw milk is very healthy and even helped her family get rid of health problems.

The business works on cow milk shares. One share in the herd is \$5 and will entitle the shareholder to one gallon of milk per week. Shareholders may buy as many shares as they want and the shares may be sold back at any time. A monthly boarding fee of \$28 per share provides for the maintenance of the herd and the handling of the milk.

In order to get their business up and running, they needed to register with the health department of Colorado. Tawnina said this is the most important part. The Uptains belong to the Raw Milk Association of Colorado, something that wasn't required but encouraged. Testing the milk is something Travis and Tawnina believe in.

"We do everything we can to ensure that the milk is clean and that it actually exceeds the standards," Tawnina said.

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The philosophy of the farm is unique. Animals that are original or haven't been bred to be fast growing or muscular is key for Travis and Tawnina. Old fashioned is another key belief.

The Uptains work together to make the process run smoothly. Travis milks and feeds the animals while Tawnina handles a lot of the veterinary work and cooking.

They wouldn't be able to run Homestead Farms without the help of friends in and around the area they said. Dr. Darrell Tomky, Gary and Carolyn Sperber, Randy Hale, Marc Wailes and Rick and Kathy Haynes are just a few people they say have helped them greatly.

"People helping us out of the kindness of their heart is what really helps," Tawnina said. "We wouldn't be able to do it."

Taking a look at Travis and Tawnina's backgrounds one would've never guessed they would be raising goats, chickens, hogs and cattle.

Travis' mom is in politics while his father's talents are spread all over the map. Tawnina said she grew up back stage of the Grand Ole Opry. Her family was involved with music and she was always moving around.

"We weren't raised in this," she said. "We chose it. This is what was meant to be."

Travis and Tawnina would like to hold a cheese making workshop later this month provided enough people are interested. They would like to get the word out and educate people about raw milk and the benefits it has.

This is a way of life for the family. Tawnina said she wishes they would've started a long time ago.

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“We’re always going to be doing this,” Tawnina said. She said even if people don’t want their products, they will continue on because they believe in it so much. She would like to see the business expand but never change. There is nothing they would alter from what they do now.

The Uptains are willing to give tours to people around their farm and even let children milk the cows.

For more information on Homestead Farms, contact the Uptains at 854-5013 or check out their website at [www.thehomesteadfarms.com](http://www.thehomesteadfarms.com).