

WINDY RIVER LIVESTOCK



For Windy River Livestock, the goal has always been to farm. But the journey has taken unexpected turns, requiring adaptation, dedication, and perseverance.

Will and Jocelyn, the couple behind the business, met on a trip where they both served as dairy judges for livestock competitions. Will grew up on a dairy farm in Washougal, and Jocelyn is from Tillamook, where she was surrounded by a strong dairy tradition. They began raising a herd of Jersey cattle on Will's family farm while Jocelyn finished college and Will worked as a welder on power substations around the country.

Two weeks before their wedding in 2012, there was a fire on the family farm in Washougal that destroyed a 100-year-old barn and the milk parlor, where all of the milking equipment was held. With the expensive dairy infrastructure demolished, Will and Jocelyn's plan to be dairy farmers became difficult to realize. They sold all of their Jersey cows, typically used for milk production, and bought their first two beef steers.

The cattle eat grass hay that the family grows on their property, as well as spent grain from a brewery in Portland. For the pigs, Windy River purchases a corn- and soy-free pig feed from a local, family-owned milling company. While not certified, Windy River uses organic practices and rotational grazing in order to be sustainable stewards of the land. They are working on moving to a larger property in Washougal, which will allow them to keep the cattle outside year-round without exhausting the land, and expand their pork program.

They participated in their first season at the Vancouver Farmers Market in 2019. The business has doubled each year, and in May of 2021 Will was able to quit his welding job and dedicate his full-time efforts to Windy River. They find they get a lot of visits from repeat customers, and business from people who were recommended their meat by word of mouth.

"It takes all types of agriculture to feed the world, but when you know your local farmers it's such a better relationship to know the person who's growing your food," Jocelyn said. "It's nice to know that people go to their freezer and have meat with our name on it."