

Full Circle Farms

January 2019

www.myfullcirclefarms.com



Beef is finally wrapping up from Last year, 2018. Thank you to everyone who patiently waited while the bovine took their time to complete their growth. Hopefully, it will be worth the wait. As we have been growing our beef herd, we have had to purchase calves from year to year to have enough to fill our ever-increasing orders. This year 2019 will be the first year we don't have to purchase calves. All the beef that will be available this fall was born here and the farm. This is very exciting for us to see how well our cows/ calves produce and grow. This is doubly exciting because it is VERY difficult to find grass fed, organic calves year after year. We are so thankful that we don't need to look anymore...

Look Ahead

February is here!!

February is quickly slipping past, and we are looking forward to spring, or should I say: "Mud Season" here in Michigan.

- Order forms go out February 14th. Be sure to look for them in your mail box.
- Newsletters are coming once a month. To keep you updated on happenings at Full Circle Farms
- Once again we are going to do pastured poultry this year. After last year's devastation and some heart felt talks. We have decided we are not quitters. So, we will lift our head and trudge forward.



If you wish not to receive our newsletter, or if you know of someone that might enjoy a few tall tales from the farm, please let us know so we can add or subtract you from our email list.

From our Kitchen to yours



Potato Leek Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large leeks (about 3 cups after chopping)
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 4 cups chicken broth (or vegetable broth for vegetarian option)
- 2 lbs potatoes (Yukon gold or Russet), peeled, diced into 1/2 inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, less or more to taste
- Pinch of dried marjoram
- 1 or 2 sprigs of fresh thyme, or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- Sprinkle of Tabasco sauce or other red chili sauce
- White or black pepper to taste



Have you ever been shopping in the Health and Beauty Care section at your local supermarket? We live on a farm and use the old farmers' tricks for keeping skin from getting cracked during the winter months, but while shopping with my three daughters I was amazed at the differences between our balm and the lotions, balms, salves, creams, and stuff that are now being marketed as good for your skin. We use homemade skin balm made primarily from tallow and lard, so I began to wonder if these items were also in the mass market lotions and creams that my daughters were buying. What I found when I began researching the ingredients on these products was eye-opening.

Most of us don't even realize that the skin is the largest organ in the body. I admit I had forgotten this fact in my 3 or so decades away from school. As a homeschooling family, we have done our homework in biology and anatomy. We understand the basics of how the body works, how our organs function and how our bodies receive and utilize their nutrients. These have all been topics of discussion and learning. The word '**toxic**' is defined by Webster's dictionary as "containing or being poisonous material especially when capable of causing death or serious debilitation". With the increased use of skin patches (nicotine, etc.) for health or drug therapy, we are increasingly applying chemicals to our bodies that are absorbed through the skin. I began to wonder about whether we are polluting our bodies simply by the things we touch. Are we doing more harm than good with chemical skin creams or moisturizers? I began to wonder if we were ignoring dangers to our bodies for the sake of make-up and supposedly therapeutic skin creams. I became even more curious as I began reading the labels on some of my daughters' skin care items; I was in for quite a shock.

Since my eyesight isn't what it used to be, I chose the item with the easiest label I could read. Even so, I had to get a magnifying glass out to read the fine print. My item of choice was a simple skin moisturizer, I am going to ignore the brand name because after reading 3 different manufacturers labels they all contained roughly the same ingredients. Water is the first ingredient on all 3 labels; for the sake of argument we are going to classify water as non-toxic. Glycerin is the next ingredient on the labels, it is also known as ethylene glycol. After reading the Material Safety Data Sheet for this chemical I saw that if ingested it can cause effects on the central nervous system, liver and kidney damage, and have cardiopulmonary effects. The next ingredient shared by all 3 brands was Petroleum. Petroleum is generally what we call crude oil after it has been through a refining step. I would say that motor oil would be toxic after it was put into the body. Moving down the list I come across chemical name after chemical name and none of them are recognizable as having come from a plant or animal source.

Okay, so now that we have talked about the scary stuff, the chemical equation that is supposed to heal our skin organ, we have a follow up question. What did our grandparents use to take care of their dry and cracked skin before we had Oil of Olay or Gold Bond, petroleum jelly or hydroxyethyl urea (I can't pronounce it either)? The answer is a simple one, tallow. It turns out that tallow is in quite a few cosmetic items already and was one of the first items utilized for skin moisturizers. Since tallow is simply rendered beef or lamb fat, it is edible and non-toxic, but lamb and especially beef tallow have the most amazing story.

Tallow contains 50-55% saturated fats, which is almost identical to the makeup of healthy human skin cells. Tallow also contains a healthy dose of the fat soluble vitamins A, D, K and E. These vitamins occur naturally in pastured cattle. The potent anti-inflammatory, conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and the anti-microbial palmitoleic acid are also included so that you have the makings of a one stop shop for skin care. But it seemed to get even better. Tallow is also extremely similar to Sebum which is an oily secretion that comes from microscopic glands in our skin. Sebum is the material that helps to seal and protect our skin and hair. As it turns out, Sebum is also the Latin word for Tallow which I found interesting. It looks like our grandparents had this skin care thing figured out decades ago.

I decided to do a quick Google search and look for skin products that were tallow based and came across another eye-opener. A lot of the products that use tallow as an ingredient use it as a marketing gimmick. A lot of these products also contain similar, if not identical chemicals that are used in the conventional skin lotions I was reading previously. There are pure tallow alternatives out there to be sure, but make sure that as a buyer you take a look at the entire ingredient label to make sure you are buying actual, old-time tallow skin balms and lotions. Now to some people, smearing beef fat on their bodies might seem like a big step. I would challenge you to consider the alternative, is 10W-40 in a pretty bottle the next best option?

After all of my research, stumbling over chemical names, and hopes that I would finally find one I could pronounce, I told my girls that their skin is an organ and should be treated as such. If their skin care items are toxic to their internal organs, they probably shouldn't be putting it on their external one. My family will use the off-the-farm, homemade skin care tallow balm, just like grandma used to make. It still works better than the ones my daughters used to buy, and in a father's opinion it's also safer. After all, it's edible.