



Ayrshire Farm earns state's first Predator Friendly certification

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Ayrshire Farm said it is Virginia's first farm to be certified as Predator Friendly, an independent animal welfare audit and labeling system, recognizing best practices for wildlife stewardship on farm and ranch lands.

"Ayrshire has a long history of predator friendly practices," said Chris Damewood of Ayrshire Farm. "It's great to be able to add Predator Friendly to our multiple credentials such as Certified Humane and USDA organic."

Predator Friendly Certified farms strive to learn about area ecology and wildlife and value the ability of their operations to serve as habitat for wildlife, including carnivores and other key species.

Carnivores sighted on Ayrshire Farm include bobcats, bears, coyotes, bald eagles, and hawks. Through use of proactive, humane practices, and by ensuring streams, ponds, and other important habitat are accessible, Ayrshire Farm makes it possible for wildlife to coexist with livestock on private agricultural lands.

The certification program falls under the Certified Wildlife Friendly umbrella, a global network created by carnivore- and wildlife-friendly producers with business and conservation partners.

The Certified Wildlife Friendly program is designed to assess and reward farmers and ranchers across North America who coexist with native predator and wildlife species. Standards cover a number of areas relating to wildlife and predator conservation – from the provision and preservation of wildlife habitats, to monitoring requirements and permitted non-lethal predator management strategies.

The Certified Wildlife Friendly and Predator Friendly Participating farmers are audited annually to ensure they maintain and enhance wildlife habitats on their farms and employ a mix of observation and proactive practices to allow wildlife and livestock to coexist.

Earlier this month, Sharon Blick of Living Earth Farm, located in Eugene, Ore., became the first U.S. farmer to achieve dual certification from both Animal Welfare Approved and Certified Wildlife Friendly for her flock of laying hens, meat birds, and herd of dairy goats.



Blick participated in a third-party audit, carried out by an Animal Welfare Approved auditor, to demonstrate compliance with the specific standards. As a result, Living Earth Farm products can now be marketed using the Certified Wildlife Friendly logo.

Ayrshire's Predator Friendly certified beef, rose veal, pork, chicken, eggs, and honey are available online and from the Home Farm Store in Middleburg, Va. Many of these products can also be found on the menu at Hunter's Head Tavern in Upperville, Va. as well as restaurants throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Hunter's Head Tavern, the first restaurant in America to achieve a certified humane designation from Humane Farm Animal Care, was recognized earlier this year with a Snail of Approval Award from Slow Food D.C. for significantly contributing to the food system's transformation.

The restaurant, in Upperville, Va., about 50 miles from the nation's capital, is owned and operated by Ayrshire Farm, the first Virginia farm to be certified both organic and humane, which produces a variety of meats and organic produce to supply top regional restaurants, including its own Hunter's Head Tavern, Home Farm Store, and Ayrshire Farm Catering Company.

Hunter's Head was also recently recognized with a 2-star certification from the Green Restaurant Association.