



FOOD ANIMAL CONCERNS TRUST
3525 W. PETERSON AVE.
SUITE #213
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60659

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE **Contact: Jacki Rossi, (773) 525-4952 w, (219) 218-3824**
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FACT AWARDS GRANT TO LOCAL TRIANGLE BEEF FARM

Chicago-based nonprofit will increase the number of farmer grants in 2013

Chicago – In 2012, the inaugural year of the Fund-a-Farmer Project, Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT), awarded over \$13,000 in microgrants to nine farms located across the country. The grants were awarded for project to help farmers transition to pasture-based systems, improve the marketing of their humane products, and enrich the conditions in which their farm animals are raised.

Michigan farmers Phil and Annette Carper, the owners of Triangle Beef, received one of these grants from FACT. Several years ago, following a work accident at a furniture factory that left Phil without the use of his legs, the Carpers began raising grass-fed beef. Although they had not previously farmed, Annette came from a farm family. Together they made the decision to go “back to the basics” and established Triangle Beef, a joint venture where they are both involved in the day-to-day operations of the farm.

Their land near Fennville, Michigan was originally a wooded area. Triangle Beef now has four pastures and raises beef cattle which are rotated from one pasture to another as needed. One of the biggest problems the Carpers originally faced was bringing water to their cattle. It was impossible for Phil to move the hoses from one pasture’s watering tank to another without hydrants located in the pastures. In the wintertime, they hauled water from the house, which was a grueling task.

The difficulty of providing sufficient water to their animals prompted the Carpers to apply for a Fund-a-Farmer grant. FACT funded the installation of three frost-free hydrants at Triangle Beef, making it easier to provide water for their herd of grass-fed beef cattle. The Carpers leveraged their grant from FACT and were able to install two additional hydrants at minimal cost because the equipment was already on-site. Water is now pumped from a holding tank in the barn to each of the pastures. Their cows will always have the water they need and Phil will be able to more easily farm.

Looking to the future, the Carpers would like Triangle Beef to grow. Even though they are in the early stages of building their farm, they are confident that down the road things will pick up. “We believe farming involves a lot of trial and error, but we are on the right track and look forward to not only raising beef cattle, but chickens on pasture as well. This grant has helped increase the overall welfare of the cattle on this farm and aided Triangle Beef in its plans for the future,” said Carper.

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Expanding upon a successful first year, FACT plans to increase the number of Fund-a-Farmer grants awarded in 2013. The application period is now closed for the round of grants that will be awarded in August. FACT received 75 eligible applications from farms located in 23 states across the nation. In order for a humane food system to thrive, smaller-scale, sustainable operations must have access to funding opportunities to keep them competitive with large-scale operations. FACT believes that the Fund-a-Farmer Project is just one piece, one small step in the right direction. More information about this project and a complete listing of farm stories are available at www.fundafarmer.org.

“Access to this type of funding for a farm business is rare and extremely valuable to small, sustainable operations. FACT is helping deserving farmers thrive in a time of economic uncertainty,” said FACT’s Executive Director Richard Wood. “Most importantly, thousands of farm animals are already benefiting from this project.”

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Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) is a Chicago based non-profit that promotes humane and healthy farms through science-based advocacy, consumer education, and support for humane farmers. For media inquiries, contact Jacki Rossi at jrossi@foodanimalconcerns.org or 773-525-4952.