



## Tilth Farms Certified Organic Poultry Organic, Pastured Chickens Raised by Elmer Beechy & Family

**For your information only; poultry will be  
available again next season!**

We will update this page and send email reminders when the poultry is again available. Please contact the farm if you are not a CSA member and would like to be on the poultry mailing list:

[csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

Updated 1/3/2008

As CSA members we know you place value on good food raised organically using sound methods. We have been asked by members over the years to help them find a source for reasonably priced organic chickens. Until now, we were unable to find anyone who raised truly pastured chickens fed organic grain.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to make a new offering to you this fall in partnership with a local, organic poultry farmer, Elmer Beechy. Elmer and his family own and operate Tilth Farms in Elroy, Wisconsin near Hillsboro. Their home farm is about 250 acres, about half of which is tillable and the other half pasture. They also rent some nearby property and his sons own some of their own land as well. In addition to raising poultry, they also graze 100 head of cattle, grow 18 acres of asparagus, and grow a crop of winter squash as well as a large garden for their personal use. Elmer's farm has been certified organic since 1997 and is currently certified through MOSA (Midwest Organic Services Association).

Elmer isn't looking to break into the large poultry markets selling to places such as Wal-Mart, where the quality and value of his product become diluted by trying to compete with large-scale producers selling low quality, low priced goods. He prefers to do direct marketing to establish working relationships with his customers. His goal for his family and others in his community is to have a way to make a living farming at home, on the family farm, while providing others with good food at a reasonable price.

While many producers claim their animals are pasture raised, some of the practices producers employ are questionable and very few actually allow the animals to roam around on pasture outside of cages. Often there will be an open door to allow birds to go outside, but the grain and water are kept inside, so that's where the animals stay. Elmer's birds, both chickens and turkeys, arrive at his farm one day after they are hatched. They are initially kept in a barn where they are fed and watered until they have grown and matured enough to survive in a less controlled environment. Chickens are moved out to pasture when they are 4 weeks old and turkeys go to pasture at 6 weeks old. They are provided with movable shelters, feed troughs, and water systems placed outside of the cages. The chickens' shelters are low cages that are raised so the birds can go in and out as they please. The turkeys have larger shelters that are open on the sides but have a roof and places for the turkeys to roost. Every few days the shelters, feed troughs and water systems are moved a little further down the pasture to provide fresh clover and grass. **Elmer's poultry is unique in that his birds truly do live outside of cages on pasture as they were meant to be.** The chickens are pastured until about 8 weeks and the turkeys until they are 14-17 weeks old. His chickens are a Cornish Cross and the turkeys are the Large White Broad Breasted breed, both bred to produce meat efficiently. Both are fed a specially formulated balanced mix of organic feed including corn, beans, vitamins and minerals.

Delivery is available to Harmony Valley Farm CSA sites in the Twin Cities, Madison, and our local WI area.

**THANK YOU!**

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