



Angela and Alan Mahan founded Rabbit Ridge Farms in 2014.

# RABBIT RIDGE FARMS

by Ken Moore

Rabbit Ridge Farms is one of many Arkansas beef cattle and livestock operations benefiting from increasing consumer demand for what is known as “freezer beef,” or protein products that consumers are buying straight from the farm.

Located between the Center Ridge, Damascus and Bee Branch communities in southern Van Buren county, Rabbit Ridge Farms was founded in 2014 by Alan and Angela Mahan. In addition to inviting visitors to their farm venue and store, they ship their grass-fed beef, pork and poultry products to customers in 35 states.

“March 13, 2020 was a pivotal day for us,” said Angela during a recent visit to their farm.

“We actually had just finished making our deliveries in Little Rock to our wholesale customers. We supply restaurants with Rabbit Ridge Farms meats,” she explained. “We were having dinner and watching the news and looked at each other and said, ‘Our world is about to change.’”

For all the hardship the COVID-19 pandemic created, it may have been a blessing in disguise for the Mahans.

“The next week we had zero people at the farm,” Angela said. “All of our events were cancelled and our wholesale customers came to a halt because of the restaurants closing down. That was a scary moment but fortunately at the same time we offer shipping.

We ship our products across the United States. In that same week our e-commerce shipping boomed. We converted our venue into a distribution center. It required that much space at that time for us to ship out meat on a weekly basis. That was a godsend that we were able to pivot quickly, fulfill our orders across the country and still serve our community. It was community through food, it was just that our community expanded.”

Alan agreed, saying that it was their ability to ship product nationally that may have saved their business.

“We were very fortunate that we had e-commerce to fall back on,” Alan said. “How cool is it that a little bit of Rabbit Ridge has been all over the country? We ship to 35 out of the 48 (contiguous) states. I’m very proud of that.”

They also provide their beef, pork and poultry products to a number of restaurants in Arkansas. These include The Root Café, Brave New Restaurant, Table 28, and Mockingbird Bar & Tacos in Little Rock and the WunderHaus restaurant in Conway. While restaurants were forced to shut down initially last spring, many have reopened and including Rabbit Ridge meats in their menu is evidence of the growing demand for fresh, local products.

“The way we raise animals is like my grandfather did 100 years ago,” Alan explained. “We raise Cornish-cross chickens on pasture. The chickens are on grass and we move them around the