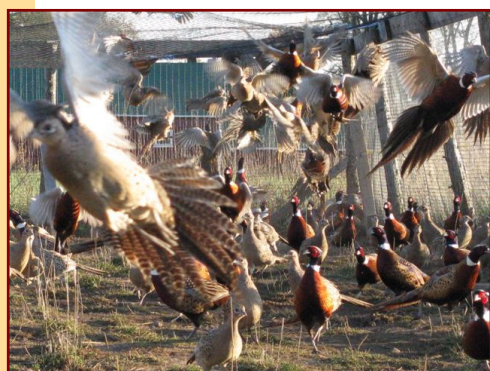


Pheasant Hill Farm

Back in 2003 when Lisa and Ivan Hill investigated the possibility of keeping poultry in their Tara backyard they encountered by-laws prohibiting them from doing so. But there were no rules against keeping game birds so they bought five pheasants. Fast forward to 2010 and Lisa and Ivan have moved their family of six children to a farm in Alvanley. Now situated on a 100-acre property they raise 630 ring-necked pheasants per year, and the business is growing. The birds are kept in a brooder house with access to an outdoor pen until four to six weeks of age when they go outside to the flight pen (150 X 50 feet in size). Operating on a small scale means Lisa has time to give the birds plenty of attention. She monitors the newly-born chicks every hour, making sure they're comfortable and that they have fresh water. Even once they're in the flight pen she savours the time she spends feeding, watering and observing these striking birds.



At 18 to 24 weeks the pheasants are ready for market and the whole family helps to catch the birds in the dark of the night. At 5 a.m. Lisa leaves for Schefter Poultry Processing in Gorrie and waits for them to be processed. She then does her distribution rounds and posts a sign at the end of the laneway indicating that the pheasants are available for sale. Lisa explains that pheasant meat has a rich, succulent flavour with very little fat and high protein. The Hills butcher the birds at a young age so they'll be tender and sweet tasting. Inspectors consistently give the Hills' birds high marks for quality and health. Lisa believes this is largely because they are raised so freely, "they're not raised in a barn in cramped quarters....they're healthy, well-developed birds".

Vacuum packaged pheasants are available year-round at the farm gate and live birds starting at day-olds are available in spring.

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