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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Issue photos and captions and up to 15 extra photos available upon request.*

### *Heirloom Turkeys*

#### **& OTHER PASTURE RAISED POULTRY**

***Nami Moon Farms, Custer***

**by Ruth Johnson, Neighbors Editor**

A murder mystery was what I walked into when I arrived for my interview with Nami Moon owners, Chris Holman and Maria Davis, who are fulfilling their dream of engaging in sustainable farming hearkening back to our earlier rural community heritage.

That morning, Chris and Maria woke up to find 15 of their 75 heirloom turkeys “gobbled” up by unknown assailants.

Maria discloses, “We think an owl, our poultry’s primary enemy, spooked the turkeys, swooping in to snatch a quick dinner. Then the turkeys must have flown from the relative safety of their area into nearby trees and brush.”

Subsequently, the major marauder was probably a bobcat, recently sighted in the Custer area. The only remaining evidence was scattered feathers throughout the area.

Actively engaged in raising legacy breeds, Chris and Maria work hard to protect their turkeys, chickens (2,700+) and ducks from predatory villains. Kelby, their Great Pyrenees guardian dog, patrols the large paddocks housing each poultry group.

According to Chris, “Since our birds tend to stay close to home, we originally let our birds roam free in their area of pasture. However, owls have taken their toll. We eventually modified the movable range shelters that we use so that the birds can be protected at night.”

#### **PERCEPTIONS**

Chris and Maria practice sustainable agriculture and humane livestock husbandry practices, pasture raising heritage breeds, keeping the strains alive for flavor diversity. They even have a farm sanctuary area where they place poultry that is pecked and bullied by the other poultry, so they can enjoy some quality of life before processing.

Maria explains, “Happy poultry translates into healthier, nutritious and delicious birds for our customers, who definitely discern the difference.”

#### STEVENS POINT LOCATION

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“We give our fowl nearly ten times more pasture space than required. They graze from opulent grasses, alfalfa, sweet clovers, dandelions, wild flowers, chicory, yarrow and other herbs. We supplement with fresh water, minerals and our own antibiotic-free feed blend consisting of locally sourced corn and soybeans, probiotics, yeast, kelp and other micronutrients, which we have milled for us at Arnott Milling.

“While hybridized breeds, like the Cornish Cross, fulfill the average person’s desire for size,” Chris explains, “the industry has teetered on the edge of extinguishing the rich taste our palates desire.”

## FULL UTILIZATION

Nami Moon is operated on Maria’s parents’ 41-acre property and raises two beehives, vegetables, mushrooms and thousands of poultry annually with fruit, berries and eggs in coming seasons.

Maria’s mother, Cindy Davis, says, “I lived here for over 16 years without utilizing the land or knowing what it looked like. Now, I have walked most of it and even helped plant an acre of hops.”

“It is pretty wonderful seeing all of the great things Chris and Maria are doing with the farm,” exclaims Cindy. “I especially like the bees, who seem to have it all together - very organized, everyone has a job to do and no one complains!”

Nami Moon’s oyster mushrooms are grown by placing mushroom spawn (mycelium) between stacked box elder logs. Covered to promote inoculation, the mycelium breaks down the logs. Once the logs are uncovered and exposed to air, mushrooms grow, ripen, and are picked and sold at local farmer’s markets.

Nami Moon’s Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/namimoonfarms](http://www.facebook.com/namimoonfarms), and website, [www.namimoonfarms.com](http://www.namimoonfarms.com), detail their full product line and the farmers markets, grocers and other sources that work with them and sell their products. [Click here](#) for dozens more Nami Moon photos in Faivre’s [Nami Moon Facebook photo album!](#)

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**Left:** Nami Moon raises many heirloom poultry breeds, including these Standard Bronze turkeys, ducks and 2,700+ chickens yearly. **Right:** Maria and Chris interact with all their poultry and find they can actually differentiate individual birds since each bird possesses unique personalities.

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