

# From the Colony to the Market

**F**OR GENERATIONS, HUTTERITE COLONIES ACROSS the region have grown food to support the families that reside within their communities.

Typically operating as large farms, the colonies have also raised and sold livestock and grains much like their neighbors.

Now, a store on 41st Street in Sioux Falls, S.D., is capitalizing on that rural heritage and promoting their products.

The Hutterite Prairie Market is not owned by any of the region's numerous Hutterite colonies. It does, however, feature many products produced at those colonies.

"We started off with intention to be as much Hutterite product as we could," said store manager and co-owner Mike Hofer.

"The Hutterite products are a big part of the store – they're the pillar of main product line. We've also added accent lines of high-quality foods to give shoppers a broad range of options," said Hofer.

Most of the meat sold at the store is grown at Hutterite colonies in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota or Canada. One area of the store features honey made at the Ordland Colony while another area features jams and jellies made at the Spring Valley Colony.

"We provide produce year-round. When the Hutterites can't provide, we source through third-party," Hofer said.

But when August arrives and the bounty of the summer gardens and orchards peaks, the store rearranges to show off the produce.

By  
Brenda Kleinjan



“When August hits, you just get blown away,” Hofer said. “We change the layout a bit to accommodate the produce.”

The store’s organic lines contain 500 lines from cereals, breakfast bars and soups, which results in a more full shopping experience.

The store’s 7,800-square foot space isn’t overly crammed with product. It’s open so shoppers don’t feel closed in, Hofer said.

“The one comment we hear over and over again is that they just love the layout and atmosphere of the store. We wanted to design it so it wasn’t like a typical grocery store. We wanted to make it simple and earthy – that traditional Hutterite spirit. I think we’ve really achieved that,” Hofer said.

The market opened in the fall of 2005. Its appeal is in part due to its locally grown products.

“When we get chickens in, they were butchered the day before. Nobody can offer the freshness of the birds we have here,” said Hofer.

“The all natural products have really taken hold as well. The whole chickens have gone over extremely well.”

“We knew we had a unique product with the beef line,” said Hofer of the Piedmontese Beef raised at Lakeview Colony near Wagner, S.D.

Beef from the store was recently showcased at the South Dakota Governor’s Hunt, an invitation-only event that pairs state leaders with business leaders looking to expand or relocate to the state.

“We were blessed that governor’s staff ordered 800 pounds of ribeyes for the Governor’s Hunt. Well over 1,000 people came in for the hunt. We were lucky enough to be able to provide the main protein item for one meal at that event,” Hofer said.

In addition to the locally grown aspect, the store also boasts of knowledgeable employees.

“Our butchers are extremely talented. They’ll give our guests ideas on how to prepare (the cuts of meat),” said Hofer.

Hofer noted that the store will display recipe suggestions for their products and also asks their customers for recipes to share.

It’s all part of building the neighbor to neighbor relationship, he said.

“We try to build a rapport and trust with that guest rather than just coming in and buying food from the shelves. We try to know our customers by their first name,” Hofer said. “We want them to feel they are buying from a neighbor so to speak and not a stranger.”

The store is set to expand its reach with the launch of a new Web site in November that features an e-commerce site.

“Any item that we can sell outside the state of South Dakota, we’ll be putting on the site,” said Hofer.

Hofer believes the site should square up well against national online specialty meat sellers.

“We’re buying the whole animal. We have a lot better control of the source of the product than these other companies do,” said Hofer of what he believes will be the store’s edge in the market.

For more information on the Hutterite Prairie Market, visit [www.hutteriteprairiemarket.com](http://www.hutteriteprairiemarket.com) or stop in at the store at 1220 W. 41st St. in Sioux Falls, S.D.

## Meat Offerings

### All Natural Piedmontese Beef

The Hutterite Prairie Market offers Certified Piedmontese beef raised by professional producers from Lakeview Colony located near Wagner, S.D. The beef is touted as naturally low in fat and cholesterol. According to the Hutterite Prairie Market’s Web site, “These cattle thrive on a natural diet of quality grains that are grown right on the colony. Equally important, they raise our cattle without growth hormones or antibiotics.”

### All Natural Chicken and Turkey

Raised from birth at Hutterite colonies, Hutterite Prairie Market’s all natural chickens are raised without use of antibiotics, growth stimulants, pesticides and hormones. The chickens are raised for more

than seven weeks in a natural environment that allows the chickens to roam freely in open spaces.

“Hutterite Prairie Market chickens live in pretty heavenly accommodations in South Dakota Hutterite colonies. They are free to roam and grow at nature’s pace. Their spacious housing features superior bedding, clean air, fresh water and sanitary feeding conditions. Protected from predators and diseases that wild birds may carry, our Chickens enjoy a low-stress lifestyle. They need no antibiotics to prevent disease,” the market writes on its Web site.

### Natural Pork

The market’s complete line of fresh pork cuts are well marbled and hand-trimmed for perfect flavor. According to the Web site, “Our pork is lean, tender and a healthy addition to your family’s meals – ready for whatever tasty additions you choose to add!”

“Oak Lane Colony raises superior pork in a humane and environmentally safe system and proudly produce natural pork products free of antibiotics for you and your family to enjoy. No antibiotics or hormones are used EVER, guaranteed by producer affidavits. You’ll discover the wholesome, fresh flavor with your first bite . . . It’s the way pork should taste,” the site continues.

Source: [www.hutteriteprairiemarket.com](http://www.hutteriteprairiemarket.com)

