

Toronto developer finds solace in farming & raising natural grown beef

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Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Baghai Development Limited was established in 1976 and has gone on to become one of the largest custom home builders in North America. With handfuls of prestigious awards under his belt, Shane Baghai continues his work building luxury homes. But, back in 2008, he took on yet another challenge.

Baghai acquired several pieces of land in Caledon and Erin with the idea of branching out into the farming industry. It was a surprising turn for a man with extensive experience in the world of real estate, and was inspired, almost entirely, by his wife.

"I became a builder, developer, a real estate person, and I never thought I'd become a farmer," he said. "I was told by a number of doctors and nutritionists that artificial hormones would not be recommended, in particular to people who have or had breast cancer."

Baghai's wife is a breast cancer survivor, and it inspired him to begin producing his own, organic, natural beef.

"Another reason was the doctors that I know recommended that, for her energy, she should have fresh eggs, to be close to nature and not indulge in beef with artificial hormones. That was what pushed me towards looking into acquiring farms and raising cattle of my own, the natural way," said Baghai.

The cattle on Paradise Farms are raised without the use of chemicals, while Baghai refrains from using antibiotics on his animals. The ensure all of their animals are given GMO-free feed to make sure they are as healthy, and naturally grown as possible.

Baghai admits he is surprised to see how big Paradise Farms has become, both locally and across the GTA. The farm's butcher shop, located in Erin, has become a popular spot for locals seeking fresh, locally grown beef.

"I've kept it as small as I can. I have enough to supply Paradise Butcher Shop in Erin. I have some private customers that only buy from us, which are very specialized meat stores, outside of the GTA," he stated.

There was a time where Paradise Farms supplied their beef to a variety of locations within and outside of Canada, but Baghai decided to scale back his operations a number of years ago. With his building business his main priority, he decided to keep supply in demand within 50 kilometres.

Farming has become a passion for Baghai, and less of a career. He enjoys the occupation, and knowing the he is providing locally grown, natural beef for the community.

"I'm still a builder, I'm a developer and I'm still building high rises in Toronto," he said. "But I enjoy farming. It gives me a tremendous amount of satisfaction."

Paradise Farms beef is more expensive than some other Canadian beef, but Baghai explains that they carry other Canadian beef for people who are on a budget.

Paradise Butcher Shop is located at 2 Thompson Court in Erin. They sell a variety of different forms of beef products including meat pies, sausages, burgers, meatballs, ground beef, and, of course, steaks.

For more information, please visit www.paradisefarmsbutchershop.ca