

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 108, NUMBER 32

Vassios Family Is Raising Happy, Healthy Chickens

Couple establishes Long View Pastures west of town



The Vassios family, Nik, Hannah, Sarah Jo, Arianna (left) and Andrea (right), are growing their business, Long View Pastures, on Garfield Table, raising pasture chickens. - Courtesy photos

By Janet Larreau

On any given day, a peep of young chicks can be heard loudly chirping at the Arnold Post Office; it's only a brief layover before they head to their new home eight miles west of town. Once there, they stay in a heated brooder for two weeks, getting a little more hardy each day, until they are feathered out and ready to withstand the variability of the outdoors.

“Yes, they arrive in the mail, and we'd like to say thank you to the Arnold Post Office for listening to our 300 chickens making a ton of noise before we get there,” said Hannah Vassios, who with husband, Nik, and their three girls, make their home on what is known to locals as the Billie Linn place.

The couple moved to this area in October 2023 from Evergreen, Colorado, establishing their new business called Long

View Pastures. The 240 acres provide plenty of room for hundreds of pasture raised chickens and a small herd of Red Devon cattle.

The Vassios spent several years raising their own chickens for eggs and meat at Evergreen, but felt called to do it on a larger scale to provide for their family, friends and community. Through research and experience, they learned that chickens that had good quality

feed and access to both fresh grass and sunlight were the most nutritious and tasted best. Their research took them to Western Nebraska. The area offers healthy soils, good moisture, and is between Boulder, Colorado, where Hannah was raised and where Nik grew up in Omaha.

“We are loving the community here in Arnold,” said Hannah. “We have wonderful neighbors, the Gandy Community Church is awesome, and the home school community has been great for our oldest,” said Hannah.

The name Long View makes reference to a special road in Evergreen, Colorado, where they started their family, and taking aim at the “long view” approach to the soil and forage quality of their property, utilizing an active approach by moving their animals daily to fresh grass.

For the chickens, this requires mobile “chicken tractors.” These 10'x12' portable coops are moved each morning to a new patch of grass so that the chickens are able to access fresh grass, have plenty of room to move around, shade and sunlight, but are also protected from predators such as hawks and coyotes. They stay in these structures until processing day. As an added benefit, each day a new part of the pasture gets a healthy dose of nutrients from the chicken manure.

The Vassios' two older girls, Andrea, 5, and Arianna, 4, are actively involved in this process. They assist in filling waterers, catching escaped chickens, moving chicks from the brooder to the

tractors, and giving the chickens plenty of love, while baby sister Sarah Jo watches and learns.

Another benefit to the soil has been adding a small herd of Red Devon cattle that the Vassios intend to grass finish. The cattle move through an area of pasture to cut down the tall grass and drop plenty of manure for the chickens to pick through. The egg-laying hens live in a chicken coop on wheels, which are moved throughout the property following the herd by 1-2 days. They are

able to happily distribute the cow manure and forage on fresh grass and bugs, with a movable electric fence surrounding them for safety.

In 2024, the family raised 600 meat or broiler chickens and the laying hens produced 10 dozen eggs per week; next season, the Vassios plan to double their production up to 1,200 broilers and 20 dozen eggs per week, and continue increasing production each year after that. They

See **Vassios Family**, page 8



Long View Pastures' laying hens emerge from their mobile chicken coop to enjoy everything the pasture has to offer, including bugs. The mobile unit is moved to fresh grass throughout the property.

Next Blood Drive Set for January 20

Help patients in need and give students a chance at scholarships

ARNOLD, Nebraska (Jan. 6, 2025) — The community is invited to roll up a sleeve and answer the call for patients in need by donating blood on Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Arnold Community Center. Blood donors are lifesaving heroes. At this special blood drive, they also have the chance to help the Arnold High School seniors earn scholarships through the American Red Cross High School Scholarship Program.

This program is available to high schools that schedule at least one Red Cross blood drive during the school year. Scholarships are awarded to students that demonstrate leadership in the coordination of blood drives for their high school's blood program.

In thanks for helping save lives, those who come to give blood Jan. 1-26 will get a chance at a trip to #SuperBowl LIX. Help tackle the need & book with the Red Cross now. (Must be age 19 or older in Nebraska to be entered)

Donating blood is one of

the simplest things a person can do to help save a patient's life. In about an hour, a blood donor can help accident and burn victims, heart surgery patients and transplant recipients, and those receiving treatment for cancer or sickle cell disease.

To make an appointment or to learn more, call the school at 308-848-2226, download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Completion of a Rapid-Pass online health history questionnaire found at RedCrossBlood.org/rapidpass and in the Blood Donor App is encouraged to help speed up the donation process. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Food Pantry, Organizations Benefit from 2024 Arnold Passport Program



Molly and Josh Magill and Tony Hall of Oakbrook Physical Therapy are pictured with the last cooler full of donations headed to the local food pantry, after collecting a small mountain of non-perishables from residents who were participating in the AEDC's 2024 Passport Program. - Courtesy photo

January 3 was the last day for 2024 Arnold Passport Program players to get a stamp from a participating business and be entered in drawings for Chamber Bucks. Retailers chose a minimum amount spent for their stamp; four businesses chose to collect donations for a worthy cause. The result of those donations was over \$1,000.00 going into the community.

Oakbrook Physical Therapy and Echo Financial chose a minimum stamp requirement of a donation to the local food pantry. Josh and Molly Magill and Tony Hall received about \$300.00 in both food and cash donations from participants at their location, and with their planned “match” donation of \$500.00, ended the program with over \$800.00 going to the pantry. Echo Pelster reports delivering four big boxes of groceries and \$80.00 cash to the pantry.

Pinnacle Bank stamped passports for a donation to Good News Club. Staff there report receiving \$528.00

First State Insurance accepted donations for the veterans memorial project, taking in \$300.00.

AEDC Director Cheryl Carson said the Passport Program drawing will be taking place on Friday, January 17, when winners will be announced.