

EPISODE 305**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:19.9] AVH: Welcome one and all to Paleo Magazine Radio. I am your host, Ashleigh. You are you and that's fantastic. I think it's going to be a great day today. I am speaking with Tara. She's the Founder of Slow Down Farmstead. She's a farmsteader. She's a hunter and a butcher. She's a military veteran. She's a registered holistic nutritionist with her own farm in Ontario, Canada, that she runs with her husband. She has three, grown daughters as well that are there with her, sometimes.

She used to work with nutrition clients and she also used to work on a larger farm and she has more recently moved into something that's a bit smaller, working to sustain her family through the things that she produces, as well as selling leftovers, bartering. She says she does a lot of bartering within the farming community, which is kind of incredible. She just seems to me to be living this incredibly rich, busy life that is deeply connected to nature and animals and food in a way that is extremely rare these days.

I think that if you care about the environment, if you care about agricultural practices, if you care about animals, if you care about the food you eat and how it gets to your plate, this episode is a must listen and a must share with other people in your life who could benefit from this. I also highly recommend you check out Tara's a website, slowdownfarmstead.com. Read some of her work, her recipes, the resources that she provides about making food choices. She writes with such an honesty and a beauty about things that are difficult. As a writer myself, it's really incredible to read, so I highly recommend you check that out and just learn as much as you can from her.

Tara believes that it is a moral imperative to give the animals that we are eating a humane and good life while they are alive. She talks about the fact that butchering animals is the worst part, of her job, of course, but that it's a responsibility that she refuses to turn away from just because it's painful. That is something that I think is really profound, because we are most of us in such fortunate places, where we don't have to face the discomfort that maybe we as a human animal have had to deal with most of our history.

We have really comfortable lives. We can get other people to do a lot of the nastiest part of life for us and that really many of us, meat eaters especially and I'm talking about myself here too, I'm not above reproach here. We oftentimes don't want to think about, or contemplate, or understand what it takes to take an animal and turn it into nutrition. We don't want to think about the process and what has to happen.

Many of us who in saying that it makes us uncomfortable, or it's sad, or we care about animals, we don't want to think about them suffering that we in a lot of ways are actually complicit and allowing a lot of these inhumane factory, feedlot practices that we know across the border bad. We're allowing those to continue, because in saying that we love animals too much, we turn our faces away from what's happening and we refuse to accept it and we were refuse to bear witness to it and understand that there are different ways that it can be done.

Vegans, ethical, sustainable meat eaters, we have lots in common honestly, including the desire for animals to be treated well. When their lives end like all lives end, it can be done in a humane way. I think that trying to pretend that we are above, or separate from the lifecycle from the animal kingdom and from the food chain is irresponsible. I really do believe that. We don't all have to become hunters and butchers and farmers, but we can learn and educate ourselves and try to — with our dollars and with our actions and with our behaviors, make this process a better one for everybody, including the animals.

Tara is actually writing a book about this topic, so I really can't wait to read it. Anyway, we get into it we talk about what it's like to care for the animals that you're going to then harvest and kill and eat. We talk about what it's like to run a farm, how she learned about hunting and butchering. We talk about how the rest of us, non-farmers, can become more involved and educated on these processes that sustain us.

I really think this is an important conversation. I'm so grateful to Tara for doing this work and sharing it with us. I really, really hope that you enjoy it yourself and you learn something and you share it as well. Before we get started, real quick, shout out to our show sponsor Wild Foods. They are awesome. They provide me with so many amazing high-quality paleo-friendly supplements and products and stuff that I incorporate into my daily life. They have such a wide

range of things for you to try anything from grass-fed collagen peptides to bone broth protein powder. They have charcoal pills, they have coffee, they have decaf coffee, they have cold brew coffee pods, they have cocoa butter, they have mushroom powder. I mean, honestly, go to their website, whatever you need, it's there.

Head to their website, it's a wildfoods.co. Not .com, .co. If you use the code 'paleomag' you will get 12% off. Everything is free of artificial preservatives, soy, gluten, all the stuff that you don't want. It's paleo-friendly. Most of it is keto-friendly. Anything you want is there. 'paleomag' is the discount code and wildfoods.co is the website. Check them out. Thanks you guys for being a part of this podcast.

Without further ado, here is my chat with the incredible Tara Couture.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:05:57.7] AVH: Tara, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much for being here.

[0:06:01.0] TC: Yeah, it's really nice to be here, Ashleigh.

[0:06:03.5] AVH: I'm super excited. We just had a little chat offline about what a small world it is and how our husbands know each other and how we live very close to each other and these crazy small world things coming together that make this even more exciting for me. I'm really pumped to dig into it.

[0:06:20.4] TC: Me too. Yeah, it's awesome.

[0:06:23.0] AVH: Before we get into any of my selfish questions that I personally want to ask you, I would love if you can just give our listeners a bit of a background just on who you are and and what you do.

[0:06:35.3] TC: Sure. Yeah. I spent some time in the military. I got out, I went back to school, I became a nutritionist, I had a private practice. My husband and I have raised three young women together. Two of them are out on their own and our youngest is 17 now. We live on a

farm and we – Our first farm, we sold grass-fed beef and organic pastured pork and eggs and chicken and stuff like that and then we downsized to the farm. We are now where we just sell what's in excess. We raise our own food and we barter our food. My husband's semi-retired. Yeah, that's where we are now, sort of self-sustaining living. I have an Instagram account and I'm working on a book as well about our connection to the land and to animals and to ethical meat consumption and humane slaughter. That's where my focus is on now.

[0:07:33.2] AVH: That's a lot. You made that seem very casual, but that's a lot. You've been busy over the last few decades. Can you tell me when you got out of the military, you went to school to be a nutritionist?

[0:07:45.9] TC: Right. Yeah, I got out of the military. I served for seven years and then I got out and I did holistic nutrition. Then I also did a three-year program in sports nutrition.

[0:07:56.7] AVH: Okay. How did that education jive or not with the way that you approach nutrition and food and nourishment? Was it in parallel, or were there issues with the formal education you were getting?

[0:08:12.3] TC: Yeah. I would say I always try and find what's useful out of anything, the gems in something. There was definitely a lot of things that didn't jive with the way that I saw things. We've raised our kid. Our oldest daughter is 27 now, so we've raised our kids on a – it was a Paleo Weston A. Price type diets.

There were things that I felt weren't quite in-line with how I approach food, but the good things about it were just the foundational things, I think the sciences, the biochemistry, like learning how to read a study. That was just fundamental, those sort of things. I took the stuff that was useful to me and I – nutrition is one of the biggest passions in my life, so I'm always voraciously reading things. I just take what I think is good out of there and let the rest of it go, or what has been applicable to me and experiment with things and just learn how these things apply in real life and how they apply differently to different people and stuff. Yeah, I would still say it was a positive experience, even if it wasn't exactly what I thought or believed.

[0:09:22.0] AVH: Right. There's still always things you can you can learn and take with you and incorporate into your approach, whether it's a 100% in-line or not, right?

[0:09:32.1] TC: Yeah, exactly.

[0:09:33.8] AVH: Did you always know that you wanted to own, work on, be part of a farm? Did you grow up in a farming environment or no?

[0:09:42.5] TC: Yeah. We lived on the corner of my grandparents' farm when I was a little girl in Manitoba. Those memories were always the most profound for me. I would hop the fence and go lick the cow's salt lick and hang out, race the bulls to the fence line. I would be there curling up in a tractor tire and just playing with stones. I mean, those were the fundamental formations of what I wanted to get back to my entire life.

As you know, Ashleigh, my husband spent 25 years in the military, so we moved every two years maybe, two, three years we were moving. Sometimes it was eight months and we would move. I always felt a bit of a gypsy and I always wanted to lay roots somewhere, but we just couldn't do that until about 10 years ago, we bought our first farm. Circumstance had to come together with money, had to come together with where we were in our lives. I had retired from doing private nutrition, my private nutrition practice. All those things had to come together.

We always held that in our hearts. I knew it was going to happen. I meditated on it. I manifested it. I didn't know how it was going to happen, but we set ourselves up and put everything in line. I volunteered on farms everywhere we lived. Every time we moved, got posted to a new place, I would go out and find my farmers, so we had our food. All these things were always integral to how we lived. I knew it was going to happen. I doubted it a lot of times, but yeah, it was something that was really important to us.

[0:11:24.1] AVH: I think that's part of the manifesting process is the doubt too, right? That's going to be a part of it.

[0:11:30.1] TC: For sure.

[0:11:30.8] AVH: Right. It's just like, can you move past it? That's what makes the difference.

[0:11:34.4] TC: Absolutely. Yeah.

[0:11:36.2] AVH: When you had your first farm that you said was bigger and you had maybe more animals and you were more focused on maybe providing for the community versus predominantly for yourself, can you talk about that process? Was that something that you wanted to create a farm that would sustain the community and you could make money by selling and then you transitioned into something that was a little bit more pared down? Can you talk about that evolution?

[0:12:00.4] TC: Yeah. That was always the plan, exactly what you just said. I mean, I feel very passionately about raising animals humanely. I had an incredible mentor in my life. He was my best friend. He was a lifelong cattleman in Alberta. I would squirrel away weeks at a time and go spend time with him and he taught me how to do on-farm slaughter, he taught me about butchering, he taught me. He shared with me all about his connection with the land and what it was to be connected to the land and the animals. He was just the biggest gift in my life as far as friendship and really learning from someone that was so deeply, deeply connected.

I just respected him immensely. I would spend weeks with him and every year sometimes a month or so and learning from him. I just was so driven to contribute and to be connected and to provide food like that for people from my own land, from our own land, or the land we were using. I don't really think anyone can own land, but from where we were. We went into that with – we had that, our friend, my mentor, also other friends and farmer friends and mentors, we were always using our free time to spend time learning about these things and reading books and going to farming conferences and everything. Before we even had land, we were doing that.

We bought a 200 acre farm and we were selling grass-fed beef. There was just a lot of concessions that you have to make when you're doing things to sell to other people, because it's very, very expensive to raise animals in the way that I wouldn't compromise on. In Canada, we cannot do on-farm slaughter and legally sell that meat. It's highly illegal. As you know, you can't sell raw milk, which is highly illegal. All this stuff happens, but it's very underground. If you

get caught, you can lose everything. I have friends that have been in the court system for over a decade dealing with, because they sold another person raw milk.

Anyway, yeah, so that was – We were breeding and raising our pigs and everything. It just our life circumstance what ended up happening with us, like our kids were all home, they were younger and we were going to bed at 1:00 every morning coming in from outside, 12:30, 1:00 in the morning. The amount of money that we were putting into the farm, all of our money was going into the farm.

There's a lot of details on a lot of stuff. I mean, that's a whole other topic and it could be a whole book about the cost of setting up water systems, fence, saying buying your base livestock. It goes on and on and on and on and on. We just had decided at a certain point that for the amount of money that we were getting, and I want to just be clear that it's not just money, because you are – It's not just monetary is what I'm saying the rewards of doing these things. It's not just monetary. You're basically buying yourself a lifestyle and a way of living that to us was really important to have that autonomy to be doing these types of things within our community.

We just had made the decision that we wanted to downsize, we wanted to slow things down and we started looking around to see if there was a way that we could do that, to have the lifestyle that we wanted, to still be able to do these things, to still be working on the land and contribute, but just doing it on a smaller scale. That was the start for us on a personal level, our decision to do that.

[0:15:41.3] AVH: Okay. Yeah. I mean, I just recently watched – I don't know if you saw the biggest little farm documentary on Netflix. I'm not sure how much time you have to watch Netflix.

[0:15:50.3] TC: Well, I did see it.

[0:15:51.8] AVH: The biggest takeaways from that really for me, yeah, yeah, is how incredibly complex and difficult and of course, time-consuming, but also expensive it is to run a farm that as you said, has super high standards and high-quality and isn't just going to put Band-Aids on

things and Band-Aids being pesticides. How just every issue and constantly working to solve every issue, whether it's pests, or whether it's irrigation, or whether it's weather, or whether it's having enough resources. I mean, it's just never-ending.

One of the things that it gave me so much appreciation for the farmers and the farms that are willing to do that hard work for the rest of us, so that we can have those health benefits. You just have to be so passionate about it, because it's so difficult. You'd think people like me, lay people who don't know anything would think like, "Okay. Well obviously, it's a lot of work." If this is the "natural way of doing things," that's got to make it a little easier, right? No. Not at all. It's so much work. Yeah. I have so much respect for the people who are willing to put that work in, because it's just – I mean, it's incredible and it's never-ending.

[0:16:59.2] TC: Yeah, it's true. It's never-ending. You just have to get into the mindset. That can be hard for people. I'm a type of person that likes to jump into something, put my head down and get it, or just let's do this thing and we're going to get through it. You really have to be humble. Yeah, there's a lot of humility that goes with looking around and seeing 50 things that need to be done and saying, "Yeah, it's okay because I did this one thing today." It's a big mind shift and you have to allow yourself that gift of accepting things that are never quite done, which can be hard for some personalities.

[0:17:33.3] AVH: Yeah, absolutely. What does your farm look like now? Because you said it's mostly – it's self-sustaining and then you've got a little bit of extra that you use for bartering or selling. Can you talk about what the situation is now?

[0:17:45.4] TC: Yeah. To some degree, because some things like I said, are not completely – there's quite an underground network of food that moves around farms and around farms. For us, we have milking cows, we have beef cows. We have 12-head right now of cattle and that will be – that should be 18 in the spring when start having babies. That's pretty much maxed out for us. We used to keep a bowl, but now we lease a bowl from friends of ours, so that was another thing that changed.

We have breeding pigs. With our pigs, we raised a heritage pig on pasture and they get supplemented with the organic feed. All the feed here is organic, which is very important to me

and I can talk about that if you want. With the pigs, we raise enough. If I have people that want to buy some from us, I have some friends that buy from us and I keep back enough of the young piglets to raise for them and then we also sell live piglets to other farmers who are – who want to raise them but don't want to keep breeding larger breeding pigs, so they'll just buy young pigs in the spring and then raise them until the fall.

Then we also sell live milking. Well, they're called heifers, so a young cow once she's weaned from her mother. When we got into farming, there's a real problem with finding A2 milk. I'm sure you know about A2 milk, right? We had a hard time finding cows that were A2 milk cows and that could do well on grass alone, because our cows are really in North America, are really bred – well, almost everywhere. Dairy cows are really bred to be dependent on grain.

We had a really hard time. We went through over 30 animals trying to find the proper genetics of a heritage breed animal that could do well on grass alone, that could raise her calf and that could produce – that had A2 milk and had the health and the vitality to be able to do that. That took a really long time. Now when we have excess young animals, we'll sell them live to other small farms that are looking for those types of genetics in cows. Actually, we have a waiting list of seven people right now. It would be a couple years to even get through those people, because we also keep some for us.

Then we just have ducks, geese, hens, turkeys. All of our animals are heritage breed animals, because they have that vitality. We have meat rabbits. Yeah, we have a little bit of everything. Diversity is really important to us, because every animal plays a different role. Then we yeah, sell our excess, what we don't need for ourselves or our family. We also barter some of our food with other farmers. Yeah, that's where we are right now.

[0:20:39.0] AVH: It's very cool. Can you tell us what the difference is between milking and beef cattle? Why they're different and how they're different?

[0:20:47.3] TC: Yeah, sure. There's different breeds. They've been bred, so that milking cows, you've probably seen them where they almost look – some people think they look skinny. It's just that they put all of their fat into their milk, so they're different breeds. Normally, the milk that you would drink out of the stores coming from a Holstein, they're the black and white cows that

people are familiar with, they produce a large volume of milk. Not very much butter fat in their milk and they're typically A1 one cows, which has been thought to maybe be causing a lot of the problems with dairy intolerances, not to mention the pasteurization and modernization of the milk.

The traditional dairy breeds were cows like Jerseys Guernseys and Milking Shorthorns, these are a heritage breed. You're more likely going to find these breeds – some of them have A1 genetics, but because they've been crossed through the years. A lot of them are still A2 A2 and you can actually test for that. All of our cows are tested. I've done testing for friends that are farmers as well, to see if there's our A2 A2. I know a lot of dairies are starting to begin the process of switching to A2 A2 genetics.

Then a beef animal will be more – they'll keep their fat and their weight. They'll put on weight a lot differently. You could just look at their body frames and see that there – there are different types of breeds. There are going to be a bigger, larger framed animal, they pack on muscle a lot differently. There's a huge variety between those as well. There's these continental breeds, like Sharlee and Limousine and these type of beef cattle that are huge, but they're big, big grain gobblers. These are the type of these continental breeds are the ones that end up in a feedlot system.

Then you also have beef breeds that are heritage breeds, so that cow, I'm thinking Devens and Red Polls and Herefords and just these older type breeds that are a smaller frame, but do really well on grass. Again, there's variety between animals and all that stuff, but I'm speaking in generalities. They do a lot better on grass. They finish really nicely on grass. They're not dependent. They haven't been up bred to get huge on grain, like feedlot cattle have.

[0:23:11.5] AVH: I had no idea there were that many types of cows, first of all.

[0:23:14.4] TC: Oh, I just seemed a little bit.

[0:23:15.5] AVH: Geez. I thought there were – Oh, my God. I thought there were half a dozen. There's hundreds.

[0:23:21.8] TC: Oh, there is. Yeah. There is.

[0:23:24.5] AVH: That's crazy. Just to confirm just for our listeners who may not know, so the difference between you're talking about A1 versus A2 milk. We're just talking about different proteins that are more or less problematic for the general public, right? A2 tends to be a more, a better source generally that's less problematic for people in terms of digestion and being able to tolerate it.

[0:23:45.3] TC: Yeah, exactly. A2 is a beta casein protein and it's what was traditionally found in milking cows and somewhere along the line there was a blip. There was a mutation where there was the A1 was formed. I think that happened in Holsteins, because holsteins are usually A1 A1. There's some people breeding them now to A2 bulls, so we're starting to see changes. There is a theory. There's a book called *The Devil is in the Milk*, if anyone wants to read more about it that this coincided with this problem with lactose intolerance and dairy issues. Like I said, I think it also involves the pasteurization of modernization, the volume of grains that these animals are fed. I think it's a big picture, but that definitely plays a part of it. Yeah.

[0:24:31.6] AVH: I'd love to hear a little bit more about how your day-to-day work and life goes. I'm assuming of course that your husband's is equally invested and excited about this life as you are, or else you probably wouldn't be where you are today. You've got three daughters and you said two of them are out of the house now, but they grew up around this and I'm sure were very involved in it. Can you talk about how as a family, you run a farm every day?

[0:24:59.6] TC: Well, my daughter's at home today, my 17-year-old, because she's on the strike and she's outside doing some jobs I had for her. Yeah, I'm not sure how to break it down.

[0:25:11.8] AVH: I guess, maybe it seems normal to you because this is just your lifestyle, right?

[0:25:15.4] TC: Right. Yeah. I'll say that my kids, our two, my oldest my 27-year-old and our middle door is 23. When they were young, we were moving from military base to military base. Like I said, I was always sourcing our food from farmers. We were always spending time at

farms. We actually volunteered on farms. It was really important to me that even though we were in an urban setting as urban as military bases, that they still had –

[0:25:47.0] AVH: Not that urban, but not quite a farm.

[0:25:51.0] TC: Yeah. That they still had that connection to our food. When it was harvest day, they went and they had to take part in that. They really get that. Then when we had our own farm, there would be an animal that we would – during harvest, they would always take part in that. Every time we would sit down to eat, even before we had our own farm, they would always say like, “Who is this? Who is this animal that we're eating?”

There was a name that went with it and it was a story about where we got that, on whether we had hunted it, or the farmer had told us about it. We always had that connection. To them, that's normal. To them, that's normal. To them, they couldn't imagine eating something that they didn't know the name of. It's just because I think people think that that's too intimate and it causes discomfort. It's actually a beautiful connection and it leads to this responsibility. I think we all have to have responsibility for how, what goes into our mouth, how that was raised. I think that's truly caring about the environment and caring about the climate is to have that type of intimate connection to our food.

As far as day-to-day, Ashleigh, it really is – my daughter's outside right now loading up wood to bring to the front house, because our furnaces went kaput, so we only have our wood-burning stoves and so she's loading that up. I don't think of that as anything –

[0:27:22.9] AVH: Right. That's just living day-to-day. That's not work.

[0:27:26.4] TC: Yeah. Just life. Yeah.

[0:27:30.1] AVH: Is it snowing where you are as much as it is where I am?

[0:27:32.8] TC: It is snowing a lot. It's so pretty.

[0:27:35.3] AVH: Yeah. It's beautiful though. Yeah, we're in like a snow globe. It's nice. Yeah, and one of the things you touched on too, the idea of the better, the more intimately acquainted or aware you are of the animals that you're eating, it's possibly more uncomfortable for people. I think one of the things you've talked about, like I've read a lot of your blog posts, which are actual poetry, by the way. I can't get enough of it, because it resonates with me so strongly. One of the things you talk about is even if it is uncomfortable and I think you've mentioned this, I'd like you to talk a little bit more about it, the butchering and the slaughtering and the harvesting and all of that stuff. That's not fun. No one's pumped about doing that, but that's important.

If it's uncomfortable, that's fine because there are aspects of life that maybe should be uncomfortable, because that's going to give you more respect for it and more awareness of the seriousness and the intensity of what it means to be alive and to be a part of the lifecycle and to be a part of the food chain. We are so coddled in Western world, most of us by and large that we don't expect to ever have to feel any discomfort, or any connection with the work that it takes to nourish ourselves and for people who eat meat and don't want to know that it's – don't want to eat it on the bone and don't want to know where it came from and don't want to know what it took to get there, that's a privilege that we're all allowed to have, but we may not necessarily be benefiting from.

I'd love for you to talk a little bit more about that and maybe we can go back and start with you talked about you had essentially this friend, who's was almost an apprenticeship in Alberta with this cattleman, which is an awesome title. You learned about butchering and stuff through him. Can you talk about that?

[0:29:22.1] TC: Can I talk about without crying, that's the question, because he's died.

[0:29:26.9] AVH: Oh, I'm sorry.

[0:29:28.9] TC: No. He was a lifelong cattleman. He was in his 60s when he passed away, but he just got it on such a big level. He was charismatic and so passionate and loving. I remember the first time I had started, I had asked him to let me come out there and just to take me on and let me follow him around. I had started doing that every year for quite a few years. I remember the first time I went out there and he had – so he had about I think it was 7,000 or 8,000 acres,

native prairie grasslands. By the way, his son has now taken over the farm and he's just as brilliant as his father.

He raised bison, he also raised beef cattle, but he raised bison. These bison were about as this is like about as close as you would ever get to going back to these – to the prairie with these native grasslands that had never been plowed up, when bison used to roam and form those soils and were such a huge part of the ecosystem. He had these herds of bison that never saw people. You would have to drive for a very long time to go find where they were and they were living how they would live. They had their male bulls that they accepted. They had the male bulls that had been shunned. There was different groups and different family units.

Anyway, this first time I ever took part in harvesting an animal, we got in the truck and we drove down and we drove for close to 45 minutes looking for them, first of all. We found them on a snow wall and I was absolutely terrified, Ashleigh. I was like, “What am I doing here? Who am I kidding? What the hell is wrong with me? Why do I keep doing these things to myself?” I was like, “I can’t do this. I want to get [inaudible 0:31:28.5].” I was trying to be so cool about it. I'm like, “Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We're going to do this.”

[0:31:35.5] AVH: Just give me a piece of cake.

[0:31:37.8] TC: Yeah. Anyway, so we found the bison. We watched them for quite a while. He showed me what he was looking for and we spent so long, so many hours doing that, where we would sit on a fence post and he'd be pointing to beef cattle and he'd say, “You see that one? That's one's not finished. That one needs two more months on grass.” I'd be like, “What are you looking at?” To me, that one looks like the one beside it. He would be, “No, that one's not finished. That would be a miserable eating experience.”

God, I could go on about poor grass finish beef for hours, because there's so much of it, where people are just butchering these animals too early and they're too lean and it's just chewy and there's no fat on it. People say, “Well, that's grass-fed beef.” No, it's not. That's improperly finished grass-fed beef. Anyway, that's a different topic.

He found the animal that he was going to harvest and he shot the animal from afar. We went to the animal, blood it out. We said, we stayed there and he spoke the spirit of the animal, whether people think that is meaningful or not to them, irrelevant. It was meaningful to him and it's meaningful to me, so we still do that practice to this day.

It was life-changing for me. I know it to some people, it sounds maybe morbid, but it was one of the most beautiful things I had ever experienced. If I can be so indulgent as to explain why, it's just –

[0:33:10.5] AVH: Yeah, please.

[0:33:11.5] TC: To just sum it up, when I was growing up, there was quite a bit of tumultuousness. I was terrified of death. I was always terrified of death and I was scared when people laughed that they were going to die and I wouldn't have anyway. It just became this consuming, like I was always terrified of death and it just seemed so scary to me. I was raised Catholic. I wasn't sure that I'd get to the right place if I died. There was all this stuff wound up in it and it was kept so far away from me. I think it is for a lot of us.

If we have faith, we're told to believe something, but the actual experience of death now. We don't have wakes anymore. You don't have a body sitting in the living room and everyone's talking about old Uncle Joe and what a good guy he was. We hide it and we keep it away and we sanitize it. With animals too, right? We put it in meat and cellophane and other people do it for us.

I just really thought that it was going to be violent. I didn't know if I had what it took to take part in that. I thought that it was just going to be too much for me, that I was just too compassionate, that I was too sensitive about stuff like that. Something happens when you take part, there's this level of responsibility. That's huge and that has to be felt I think by people. I don't think that it can be explained that well.

The big thing that happens is that you actually experience the lifting of a soul. I don't want to get too far into that, because some people are probably rolling their eyes, but you understand immediately that there is an animal and a life force there. When that life force is extinguished

through the body, that spirit moves on. You experience that, it's tactically. It's tactile is what I'm trying to say. It's real. You physically experience that. You can feel it. You can feel that spirit leaving. Suddenly, there is no longer that animal there, but there is meat that's there. There's no nourishment there. That animal goes and leaves you that nourishment.

I've written about, I call it the sacred covenant. It's this relationship, this reciprocity that we have. We raise these animals well. We give them the life that they need to be fully realized as the creatures that they are and the reciprocity about is this nourishment that they leave for the land itself by grazing it. For us as the human beings that have this woven relationship with them. All of that stuff, just I mean, it's so much more and it's hard to relay and using words, but it was profoundly life changing for me.

My goal when my youngest daughter moves out is to spend my energy and time in working towards getting farm slaughter legalized in Canada. I think every animal should be. If people want to buy an animal direct from a farmer that has been harvested in that way, not put in a trailer, not brought into an abattoir, but is actually just on pasture, under the sun, eating grass and it's so instantaneous and humane. That's it, a bullet in the brain, down.

Anyway, that's something I really want to work towards legalizing in Canada. It is legal in some other places. I think that we need to, if we're talking about the ethical meet, we also have to talk about the ethical and humane slaughter of those animals as well. I might have gotten a bit off track with that. I tend to do that on the subject.

[0:36:58.9] AVH: No, no. That was perfect. I mean, no I appreciate it and I thank you so much for sharing that, because this is intense. This is intense stuff that we're talking about. I appreciate you sharing your experiences. I think just going back to what you were saying and what I was saying before that is you've mentioned how butchering and slaughter and butcher is the least pleasant part of the work that you do, but it's just as important and deserving of respect as all of the work you do caring for the animals before they're harvested and caring for the land. It's something that I think the rest of us privileged people need to hear that the very people who eat animals, but don't want animals to suffer, we don't want to think about animal suffering, we don't want to think about pain and death.

By turning a blind eye to how our meat is slaughtered and prepared and harvested, we are actually allowing the inhumane feedlot factory farms, just unpleasant stuff to happen, because we aren't willing to look at what the options are, to look at how it could be, to experience what it could be. We're just saying, "We don't want to look at it. We don't want to think about it. Just let me buy my beef in the grocery store and I just leave it at that." That's what's really allowing a lot of these inhumane practices to continue, right?

[0:38:15.6] TC: Mm-hmm. Exactly. I have had so many people that have – I had a neighbor actually cover her ears and start singing the ABCs when I was talking about grocery store meat like a child, because she just didn't want to hear it. I mean, I've had so many people suggest to me that I'm made of some tough stuff. "Wow, you're strong to be able to do that."

It's like a hidden insult in a way. If you're compassionate, you don't face these things. If you're compassionate and you really love animals, that's the other thing here. "Oh, I love animals and I could never do that." I know for a fact they're buying me from the grocery store. It's just this cognitive dissonance. I get it. Our system is set up for that. Our system is set up to keep you away from it and to buffer that.

Behind that system lies a lot of cruelty and a lot of destruction, both for the animals and for our environment for the land. I really want to pull that back a little bit and to suggest to people that that we have to face these things that make us uncomfortable, not just – like in everything, everything that makes us uncomfortable, we have to get into that. Because that's where growth comes. Who wants to be stagnant in their thoughts and their feelings about things? We need to stretch and be better and do better.

I'm a little bit – I don't want to be in people's faces with it. I don't think it's the whole subject. Like you said, yes, we need to talk about the good lives and everything else, but we also need to carry that through and be really honest about what we're talking about, because creepy things hide in dark shadows. I think that we need to illuminate this. That's the only way we're going to get better is if we really shine a light on what's going on and what's possible. To ask and demand and support for what's possible.

[0:40:21.3] AVH: Absolutely. I think anybody who – I mean, most people will say that they are animal lovers. I don't think there's too many people out there who are like, "I just hate animals across the board." I don't think there's too many people in the world who are caring for animals as much as people like you. I mean, it's one thing to have a pet at home and it's another thing to take care of dozens, or hundreds of livestock in a loving and healthy and natural way. That's an incredible amount of work. You don't do that if you don't love animals, right? It's just this another way of looking at it that people don't really consider.

[0:40:54.1] TC: Yeah, for sure. The other thing people will often say is you have to – they assume that I keep a level of distance from my animals. They'll say, "Oh, my God. You put their on the food package, or you call them a name. How do you do that? I could never." I don't think like that. I really feel I have this precious gift of getting to know these animals. Yes, they all have different personalities. They're interesting. It's amazing to give them what they want as whatever the creature they are and to watch how they live and to learn things from them. I learn things all the time.

I want the full deal. I'm getting this fully realized relationship as much as a cow and a girl can have a relationship. They are not my pets, but I deeply respect them. I find my relationships with them very rewarding and reaches my life. That's what life is, right? I mean, you get to know people, you make friends, you have these relationships with people that you love and you care about and you hold back from these things and you hold back from life. Yes, that means you're vulnerable to pain, and so what? Pain is life too and I'd rather give it what I got and have to live with heartbreak too than to try and live in the semi-numb state. What's the point of that?

[0:42:20.8] AVH: Yeah. Yeah. I feel I'm getting a really good therapy session during this call too, because this is like – it's so true. I mean, this stuff – this applies to the rest of life too. This is something that I've been really exploring more and more through my time working for the magazine and on this podcast and obviously, being a very avid meat-eater. I'm starting to enter into this next phase in my own development where I want to learn more about this. I want to be more exposed to it. I want to be more part of this process and I want to spend some time maybe learning about hunting this next year and obviously, where we are in Ontario, there's plenty of opportunity for that.

Another question that I had about this is for someone like me who wants to have a bit of this experience and maybe isn't going to go to Alberta and make friends with the cattleman, but are there opportunities for people like me, without it being just a voyeuristic like, people just want to go see an animal being killed. Are there opportunities for people like me to go and experience a slaughter, or spend time on a farm and experience the harvesting process, or any part of it? Or is that something that's closed off from us, even if we want to see it?

[0:43:28.6] TC: It's hard, but it's doable. I think that more people like you should be talking to farmers and expressing an interest in doing it, because definitely the possibility of it is growing from how things used to be. I think more and more people want to somehow participate, somehow be exposed to these things as well. As far as hunting, I mean, that's separate, because the best thing to do there is to find a hunter and find someone that you can go out with and stuff.

As far as farm, being on a farm, I mean, I would say asking the farmer where you get your meat from if you can be a part of that. Maybe it wouldn't be beef animal, something that big, but it might be pigs, or it might be chickens, or ducks, or something like that. I know us when we lived on our old farm, we worked with the EFAO. They're the – oh, boy. I'm going to forget the acronym. It's just a small environmentally-friendly ethical farming group that we belong to. There's different farming groups in every state and every province. Here we have the National Farmers Union. They support small farms.

We held a course where we did on-farm butchery of two sheep at that time. We just did it outside on these tables and there was a whole bunch of people there and we were standing under the – on the top of the hill and it was a beautiful, crisp, fall day. Yeah, it was wonderful. We just broke two sheep. There's stuff like that that's going on.

I know there's some people that are starting to do on-farm slaughter courses for people. It's still pretty sporadic. I know for us, we've actually thought about when we harvest some of our cattle, we do that in the fall, usually two that we do, or pigs as well. We've thought about opening that up to people, but it's very – a little precarious, Ashleigh, because who's going to show up? I think at this point, just was some of the ideas around these things that you could end up with someone to us, it's a very sacred act and it's very intimate. Our animals know us and

everything's calm. We do that for maybe – we've had friends and family that have been there, but I don't know how that would unfold.

I think this is just stuff that's in the beginning stages of people even wanting to know. I mean, nobody wanted to know before. Probably the best thing is just to talk to farmers that you're getting your food from and see what can be done around that.

[0:46:14.5] AVH: Okay. That makes sense. Can you also talk a little bit about, you mentioned how it's not actually legal in Canada and I don't know what the rules are in the states about actually slaughtering on the farm. I'm guessing that that's a supply chain, or I guess they're thinking a regulation issue, like they want it all centralized and done their way, instead of allowing individual farms to take care of it themselves. Can you just explain that a little bit to us?

[0:46:42.3] TC: In Canada, if you do on-farm slaughter, you can do it, it's legal, but you cannot sell or give away that meat. If you were here and I did that –

[0:46:51.9] AVH: So only for yourself?

[0:46:52.9] TC: Only for yourself. Yeah. Your immediate – if I had kids in the house or whatever. There are some states in the US that allow it and different parts of the world, it's commonly done. It's a supply chain issue. It's a control issue. They talk about safety. They talk about from pathogens. There's so many, so many regulations. I mean, even in the small abattoirs about how they have to clean things and stuff, which is good. There's a whole bunch of reasons.

Ultimately, if I was butchering a beef animal here and you as let's say an eater, consumer saw value in the fact that my animal was out on grass and from afar was shot and died immediately. We're talking no cortisol coursing through its muscle. There's no adrenal glands going haywire, because they're under stress of being loaded in a trailer and they can – they're brought to this abattoir. There's a whole host of issues with that, even when it's done very well.

I mean, we had to do that, because we were selling beef and we would load animals in a trailer very gently. We handled them the way we always handled them, with care and slowness and patience. I brought them to our local small abattoir, so it wasn't like it was a three-hour ride in a

semi-trailer with a bunch of other animals. They were handled and offloaded carefully and with patience. Even then, the animals are scared. It's walking into a room that smells like bleach and everything is stainless steel and there's concrete under, its hooves.

To compare that and I'm talking best case scenario, because it gets a lot worse than that. Comparing that to what happens if you're able to slaughter an animal right on the pasture, which it's literally lived, born and then will die under and it has no idea what's coming and it's instantaneous. It's a very, very different process. If you saw a value in that and you were seeking that out as a consumer, I legally could not sell that to you.

There's a whole bunch of other stuff that is in that. It's control of our food system. It's laws that are in place, because our laws, especially in Canada are aimed at production, industrialized food production, whether that's dairy and there's a few hundred head of cattle in a barn. I'll give you an example. I have a friend that decided she was going to make cheese. They had organically raised grass-fed jerseys. They live in Alberta. In order for them to – She really wanted – She didn't want to do this under the table and just make raw cheese and stuff, because she was – they had their home and she was worried about losing everything and getting busted by the Food Regulators Health Canada.

She did everything on the up and up. She got licensed. They came in. It was just the licensing, the rules, the laws, everything that applies to let's say, Saputo, this mammoth dairy conglomerate applied to her. She had to have a washroom facility that was the same as what would be in a big industrial cheese plant. Her husband who carried the buckets of milk from the barn to the cheese shed, which was literally 25 meters have to take, I think it was over \$5,000 course in milk transport that the big semi drivers use to transport, to carry a bucket of milk. It went on and on and on. Then she constantly had people there inspecting her. There's no variance of – There's no degrees of sense that get applied to a small farm compared to these big – Whether you're talking to me about butchering, let's say if I was selling beef, we're talking maybe 10, 12 a year, compared to the people that are bringing them down to the mammoth abattoir, where they're doing thousands in one day. It's the same type of regulation and that's just meant to let the big boys keep the power and smaller farmers have to jump through all these hoops and stuff.

In Canada, in Ontario where we are, I don't know if you know this, but the turkey farmers of Ontario tried to get it made illegal a few years ago that I can even raise my turkeys outside, because they don't. They don't want me to be able to go the farmers market and say, "Look at these beautiful turkeys. They're raised on pasture, blah, blah, blah." Then they made the concession, "Okay, you can, but you can't raise more than 50 in a year." This is just economics. It's economics and power and control. That's how it's working.

[0:51:48.6] AVH: I would imagine that these regulations are probably quite similar in the states, or if not even more difficult for maybe small farms to do things the way they want to do it, because of the supply chain and the big guys are even bigger down there. Yeah, it's interesting to think about. Again, it just goes back to that documentary and showing that how much more difficult it is for normal people for "smaller people" to do things the right way. You have to love it so much to go through all that work.

I wanted to spend some time and talk about something that is I think you and I are both very passionate about, which is the true nose-to-tail eating. With that, I mean, organ meats, I mean, more than just muscle meat. You have a ton of amazing recipes and blog posts and information on your website about all of this, which I loved. I spent a lot of time going through it recently, because this is a passion of mine and it's a project that I'm working on too is writing a book about this very subject.

I wanted to just talk about it a little bit, because it's something that I think is – we're trying to normalize something that actually is normal and has been normal across most cultures and most timelines, except for literally the Western world right now, which is the idea of eating all parts of the animal. I guess, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about how you got into that. When you were growing up, were you eating nose-to-tail? Were you eating everything? Is it something that you try to encourage with your community and your family, or is it just something that is normal for you because you're eating these animals, so you're just harvesting all parts of it? I just wanted to get your feedback on it.

[0:53:33.4] TC: Yeah. Well first, I did not grow up eating those foods. Okay, that's not totally true. I did grow up eating pate, because my dad sought the family's French. Every time I went to my grandma's house, we had pate. I always loved pate.

[0:53:47.5] AVH: Delicious.

[0:53:48.2] TC: Yes. Sitting down to a plate of liver, or something, no. That straight up did not happen. Why? Well, because when I became involved in – when our kids were still small and I had mentioned that we would buy food from farmers, I could not afford, Ashleigh, to buy meat and cuts. People say to me all the time, “Oh, my God. I can't afford to buy from a farmer.” I just think, “Well, I could not afford to buy from a store, even if I had wanted to, which I didn't.” It was just an impossibility for us.

Our meat was all bought in bulk, all bought in the fall after the harvest, after those animals spent the whole summer on pasture. We got whole animals. I was like, “I want everything. Economics, economics and nutrition. I wanted everything.” That's what I got. If I would buy a couple beef, a bison, pigs, I ended up with all these organ meats and all the bones and all the gnarly bits and I had to figure out a way to make them palatable and enjoyable.

What would I do? Throw them out? Never. It's an important part of eating that animal, just not only for the nutrient density. I mean, the very exclusive nutrients that you find in these foods, but it's an honoring of the animal too. It's all wrapped up into that. Yeah, I just started – pate was obvious, because I grew up eating it. That one was obvious. The kids loved it. Who's not going to like that?

Then I just started, I know I used to make – so this was back before we ever had a farm. I used to make my own sausage, because our family loves sausage. It's pretty pricey when you're buying high-quality stuff. We would get let's say a bison in the fall and I would take a bunch of ground. I asked for it to be ground with higher fat percentage always, because I don't like the fat percentage they use in a typical ground in Canada and North America. I always asked for around 30% fat.

Then I would dice up some organ meat into there, like kidneys can be really strong, so some kidney in there. Then maybe whatever. My spices and whatever was in there. I take it all and press it into a large cookie sheet and then freeze it that way, score it, break it into little rectangular bars and then freeze it. I do that in huge bulk things, so then I had sausages that

were cheap and just were really ground beef, but what the organ meats mixed in and stuff like that.

For things like kidney, my kids' heart, I still, when my kids come home to visit, they'll say, "Mom, pick me up with heart tartare." That's their favorite thing. I will make heart tartare and pick them up at the train, or plane station. They get in the car and they're like, "Where's my food?" Because they just love it. They grew up eating –

[0:56:50.5] AVH: Lucky girls. Geez. What kind of service.

[0:56:53.5] TC: I know. They're so lucky. Yeah, they love it and they grew up eating it. I would look up. I tell people this all the time. I think maybe people are – at the time, I used to collect old French cookbooks, just thrifted ones. If I would go, I would – thrifting or secondhand store, I would I would check and see if there was anything there. They were great. Those cookbooks are fantastic resource, especially if maybe money is tight is to get old books, old European books. Because even the ones that are today, a lot of times they'll put nitrites and nitrates in there and stuff to try and preserve them. Traditionally, they didn't use that. There's still lots of resources like that out there.

Yeah, I guess maybe just having been raised eating pate. I had a bit of a pallet for it. I still like to experiment with new ways. Some things are better than others. It just becomes part of how you eat. I know for me if I go a while and I haven't eaten anything, like any awful, then I start – I'm like, "Uh, what? I feel cravy." I start missing it. I'm like, "Oh, I haven't really had anything lately, so I try to incorporate more." Then yeah, it resets me. It just becomes natural I think when you – Yeah.

[0:58:23.6] AVH: Yeah. I appreciate it, because I am this – I'm similar. I didn't grow up eating any of these – any awful, or any offcuts or anything like that and that's the excuse that a lot of people tell me when they see the way I'm eating and they're like, "Yeah. I mean, maybe." I didn't grow up eating that way, so I just can't. I'm like, "That's not a thing, guys. Most of us didn't grow up eating that way."

Also, going back to what you said about how some parts of this, some parts of life and eating and obtaining nourishment can be uncomfortable and that's a part of the human experience and I like to think about it when it comes to organ meats and different foods, I like to reframe it like it's an exciting thing, it's an opportunity. It's like, what what's going to hurt from you trying something new, okay? Maybe you try some liver and you don't like it. There you go. You just had an experience. You learned something. You move on.

Maybe you try sweetbreads, or pate, or heart, or tongue and it's incredible and you have this new, nourishing, exciting completely whole new world went up to you food-wise and nourishment-wise. It's just the idea of keeping your mind open. Especially, the arbitrariness of what we consider gross and what's not gross, right? Even the people who would never want to contemplate where their food came from, they know on some level that they're steak is the flesh of an animal, but the idea of eating its organs, or eating its tongue is just horrific and extreme.

Just think about how arbitrary and ridiculous that statement is for a bit. I'm not trying to make people feel stupid, because we're all there and we're all going through it at our own pace. You're eating one part of the animal is fine and another part of the animal is crazy. Again, it's just such a modern, privileged way to approach how we're eating animal. It's crazy to me.

With that said, I do have a question for you. I want you to hopefully illuminate a tactic for me that I haven't been able to figure out, because I do eat a lot of tongue. I get a lot of – you know Bearbrook Farms outside of Ottawa?

[1:00:28.3] TC: What are the people's names? I know people, but not farm names.

[1:00:31.3] AVH: I don't know. I have to – Okay, I'll find out and let you know offline, because that's where I get a lot of my meat from. I get a lot of elk, or not el, bison tongue and buffalo tongue and beef tongue. I love that meat, because it's muscle meat and it's very tender and it's delicious. You slow cook it and you mix some tacos and it's fantastic. I do have a hard time with the getting that outer layer off and I can't figure out why. Is it because I have to cool it after I cook it and then it makes it easy to come off?

[1:00:58.7] TC: Yes. It peels like a banana when you do it right. You cook it. I do mine in the slow cooker overnight and then take it out and put it in the fridge and leave it in the fridge until it's cool-cool later on in the day. Then it'll just peel off like a banana. You can do it with your bare fingers.

[1:01:18.1] AVH: Okay.

[1:01:18.4] TC: Yes.

[1:01:19.8] AVH: Okay. That's what I've been doing wrong. I think I'm just a little too impatient, so I'm like, "Oh, tongue's cooked. Let's do this." It's tough to take out. Is it possible, like can you overcook tongue? If you're doing it really low and slow in a slow cooker overnight, is it possible to overcook it and make it tough? Because I think I was worried about that too.

[1:01:38.9] TC: No. If it's still tough, you haven't cooked it long enough. Yeah. You could literally leave it in there for 24 hours.

[1:01:44.1] AVH: Got it. Okay.

[1:01:45.3] TC: But you have to keep the skin on it. Okay, my favorite way to eat tongue is not to shred it. Everyone likes to shred it into things, but have you tried it crispy fried?

[1:01:55.4] AVH: That's actually on my list to do. Actually, I'm lying. I have done it once, because way back in the day we got a beef heart and I think what we did was we slow-cooked it and then we sliced it and then we threw it on a cast-iron skillet, so it's a little bit – it's sliced almost like lunch meat and we made sandwiches out of it. It's really good. I also think that was a little bit before when I knew exactly what I was doing, so I want to hone it a little bit and try that again, because yeah, I like sliced and crispy fried. Oh, yeah.

[1:02:22.8] TC: Yeah, because I have – What I do is so I'll cook up a tongue, because they're big, right? That's a lot of meat on there. I'll put it in the slow cooker overnight and then I put it in the fridge and like I said, later on in the day, or the next day, whatever it is, I'll peel it. Then what's happened is the meat that's under the skin is nice and firm, because it's so jelly-ish. You

can slice it and then I'll slice it and I'll fry it up in some gee, or whatever fat you want and put some smoked salt on it. I make homemade vinegar too. It's really nice to have a – you don't have to do that part. I'm just saying how I really like it, because it's so rich. It's so, so fatty.

Just to cut it a little bit with vinegar is really, really nice. Then I just leave the rest of the tongue. I pour a little bit of bone broth and I just leave the tongue floating in cold bone broth in the fridge. Then just whenever anyone wants some, they just take and slice it and fry it up. Or you could at it to other things. You can do whatever you want at that point. It's nice that it gets that firmness, so that it is sliceable at that time.

[1:03:27.8] AVH: Delicious. Okay. For people who are slowly coming around to this idea, because I'm posting about it every day and you're posting about it every day and I am getting a lot of people who are cautiously interested, right? They're like, "Okay, maybe I can get my head around some chicken liver to start. Maybe I can start trying to look at some of this stuff. I'm interested." What some advice that you have for people who are for example, I would say – I can't speak to everybody, but the majority maybe of the listeners are living in urban environments similar to where you and I live, right?

We're not necessarily living in Downtown Manhattan, but we're not living next to a farm either. What is some advice that you have for people to just start doing some research and just starting to figure out what they're interested in? Who do they go to? Do they go to their local butcher? Do they go to the next farmers market they can find? Do they try to look up a CSA? What questions do they ask? I know that's a lot of questions I just threw at you, but just in general, how do people start to reach out and research the stuff?

[1:04:29.2] TC: Yeah. I get that question a lot. There's a few different things, like you suggested, a local butcher. I think that can be good. You have to really ask what's going on there though, because a lot of local butchers are bringing in commodity meat and cutting it up themselves. I know for as an example, our local butcher brings in – when I say commodity, I mean, industrialized pork. Then he gets the whole thing and cuts it up himself.

You still got to question where it's coming from, what the source is, how that animal was fed. If they don't know those things and maybe find a different butcher. That would be my first thing

about that. Other possibilities, there's a great website called Eat Wild. We used to be part of that actually, when we sold our meat. You can go on that Eat Wild site. It's for both the US and Canada. It might be other parts in the world too, I'm not sure. You can go on there and they have a map and it'll show farms around you. Then everybody puts a little blurb up about what they're doing, what they're raising, how they're raising it, what their values are as a farm. Then you can use that to contact people and then just drive down and meet the farmers. Any farmer you buy meat from, or food from should be willing to have you and show you around and be proud of what they're doing. That Eat Wild site is pretty good.

Another possibility is the Weston A. Price Foundation, usually has a chapter leader in every city. I know for us when we were moving around back in the day, they were invaluable for me. I've been part of the Weston A. Price Foundation for decades and we would move places. I would call up someone and they would know someone and I would drive down and go check out all these farms. Some I'd be like, "Not really what I'm looking for." That's how I found our food.

There're great farmers markets. Just knowing how to talk to farmers in farmers markets, which can be really challenging because as an example, my sister lives in Ottawa and she is pretty clued in, because I'm always telling her what she needs to ask and stuff. She was telling me about this interaction she had, where she had to – what looked like it was a certain way initially after she did some digging with questions, it turned out that there was actually meat being sold that was from a different farm altogether, but they weren't very upfront with that.

I really think most farmers are working their tails off. I don't recommend people attack them and come across as being pompous and knowing more than they do, because that happens a lot. Just having a respectful conversation. Maybe if you want to is asking if you could go out and see the farm, if that's possible. Maybe not when they're really busy in the summer, but another time. I know my daughters, my older daughters when they were in Montreal, there was a farmers that they found that were – Oh, no. Sorry, this is in BC, farmers that they found that were in northern BC. They connected with them and the farmers would come down into the city once every month or two and you would just tell them what you want and the farmer would come to a church parking lot and people would stand in line and get their orders that they would buy in bulk from them. There's that possibility too.

A lot of farmers that live on the outskirts will come in and there's also I know buying clubs, where say a group of – if you're a single person living in Downtown Manhattan, you may not be able to buy a whole bison, but you and five of your friends might. Then you get a small freezer and you've got your meat covered for a long time. Buying clubs work.

Then there's also community shared agriculture, where you pay money upfront and they are delivering. They have meat shares now too. It's not just for vegetables, where they'll come and once a month you'll get your amount of meat, depending on the size of the share that you bought in the farm. Yeah, so and it's growing all the time, what's being offered because the demand is growing. I think it's a really good news story about what's happening. You just got to excavate it a little bit.

[1:08:47.7] AVH: Yeah. Just be willing and be a little bit brave to ask questions, because like you said, I think it's all in the spirit of just curiosity and you don't have to be confrontational. It's more about just curiosity and interest and asking questions. I know I've had a couple – I had a journey to find a local butcher shop here that I think is doing things the right way. I remember I have some stories of going to other butcher shops where I'd ask for anything that just wasn't regular cuts. People looking at me like I was nuts. If I was asking for kidney, or tripe, or something and I'm like, “If the butcher's giving me that look, that's not a good sign.” It's like, “Shouldn't you guys be –” Anyway.

I remember too when I spent some time in New Brunswick when Alex was there, Alex was stationed there and there was a farmers market there, they had a wild boar farmer. We ate so much wild boar for a couple years and it was incredible. It's so delicious and we went out and went to the farm, because they invited us. They said, “Look, you're eating a lot of boar. Do you want to come out and check it out?” That's exactly what you're talking about. These people, they're more than happy to show you and give you a little bit of insight into what's really going on.

If people are interested in again, organ meat specifically, right? I just want to keep hammering this down, because I've got my own agenda. If people are like, “Yeah. Okay, I know what questions to ask, but now I want to try some liver and some kidney and some tongue.” Is there anything different that people should be looking for or asking about in terms of – because I know

people assign a lot of fear, or maybe trepidation around organ meats, because they think there may be inherently more risky, or maybe a more chance of carryings parasites, or disease, or they're scared of just – it's more tricky to prepare it, or whatever. Is there anything different you should be looking at when you're trying to source organ meats, or is it just again, the freshest, highest quality animals are going to give you the best product?

[1:10:46.1] TC: Yeah, I think it's both actually. For sure, you want to know what the sourcing of that animal is. I mean, if you consider the amount of antibiotics and topical insecticides and herbicides and then what's in the feed of the conventional animal, I don't want to be eating that liver, or that kidney, or I don't want to be eating any part of that animal, to be frank. I mean, what is that animal built on, I guess?

The thing about parasites and stuff like that, as far as liver goes, I know I will eat sometimes raw liver and I don't have a problem with it, but that liver has been frozen for three weeks, so it's three weeks for liver flukes or any parasite that's in there that it will kill that. I certainly wouldn't go to a grocery store and buy liver and eat that raw. There's just no way. Inspectors are very, very, over the top actually, cautious about inspecting livers and heart. If you ever get a whole one and you see that it's slashed, that's because they're looking inside of it for any signs of disease, illness or parasites. Often, even if you get a heart from a farmers, often it'll be cut open and that's because of that.

There's actually an inspector — when you buy from a small farmer, an inspector is a provincial inspector, or state inspector is standing there inspecting that entire carcass. If you buy from a big factory meat, an inspector might come in once or twice over thousands of carcasses. Huge difference. It's a lot of pressure for the farmer, but as far as the people eating it, it's actually way safer to buy from a small farmer, because of the demands that we have to meet over commodity food production.

As far as that goes, I encourage everyone to eat organically, whether it's meat or organ. I would obviously stick with that, because of the residues and the feed, also the way the animal is raised. If it's not organic that get into, obviously, every tissue in its body. Does that answer your question?

[1:12:54.2] AVH: Yeah, yeah. No, that's actually very, very helpful. Yeah, I didn't know that. That's actually very helpful. I don't want to keep you too much longer, because I recognize that you probably have a lot of other things that you need to be doing today. I have a couple more questions before I let you go, if you don't mind.

[1:13:08.7] TC: Sure.

[1:13:09.0] AVH: One of them is about this book that you've mentioned that you're writing. Can you tell us more about that?

[1:13:14.1] TC: Yeah, I don't know when it'll ever surface. There's probably a couple years yet, a year or two. Yeah, I'm just writing a book. I've had many conversations, both with vegans and even meat eaters and it seems to me that a lot of this movement, this misguided movement towards this plant-based way of eating, I understand that on a big level it's about economics and it's about food corporations making really cheap food for us and selling it to us as if it's going to save the planet.

On a small micro level, I'm talking about the people that we interact with daily, people that are actually moving to this way of eating, people that are vegan and all this. I think that when you drill down to the arguments and I have, because I've been in confrontations about this. Even when you present this ethical way of farming and this ethical way of raising animals, when you talk about the connection, when you talk about the fact that animals and grazers are needed on the earth, when you bring in all of these arguments, it just still falls on deaf ears.

Because when you drill down in the argument, it comes down always to the common denominator of well, that sentient being had to die for you to eat. My answer is yes, of course it did. This is part of being connected to nature is you get that. Just like, "I'm going to die and you're going to die and we're all going to die." Let's stop pretending this is not going to happen and living, sitting on our couches staring at a TV. Let's start celebrating every day that we have.

It's a hard thing to really sum up, Ashleigh, into what is your book about, but it's essentially about I really want to get into this conversation on that level and just sharing some of my stories. It's not a book about science and it's not a book about convincing people that if they – this many

hectares of land by a grazer is going to consume this much water and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's more intimate stories about that connection and how it's a beautiful gift that we have been given.

Yes, it involves death and we can still use that word death and the beauty and the reverence and honoring in the same sentence. In fact, we have to and we have to get back to that. Big things in a little book. That's what it's about.

[1:15:46.4] AVH: That's incredible. I mean, I don't know if there's a more important topic than to appreciate the life that we're given. I mean, really. If that's ultimately what it boils down to, right? It's not about convincing people to eat a certain way or do anything, it's about just being grateful for the life that we have and the time that we have and being present in that and all of the positive and negative and exciting and scary and happy emotions that come with being alive. I mean, that is a big topic. No pressure.

[1:16:19.1] TC: No pressure.

[1:16:19.7] AVH: I'm excited to see the book. Good luck. It's a lot. That's a lot. I mean, again, based on the way you write, seeing some of those stuff that you've written on your website and just see the truth and the honesty and the sincerity that comes through is it's incredible, so I have no doubt that that book is going to be amazing when it gets done.

[1:16:41.6] TC: Oh, thank you very much.

[1:16:42.3] AVH: Yeah. It's an intense topic.

[1:16:44.1] TC: Thank you.

[1:16:44.1] AVH: Yeah. Well, I mean, honestly, I don't know if there's a better place to end off than that. Maybe I'll let you go for now. I'm really grateful to you for taking the time and for doing the really important work that you're doing and I'm excited to continue to follow along and learn more and maybe come out and visit and see what you're doing at some point. Yeah, thank you. Thank you for what you're doing.

[1:17:08.1] **TC:** Well, thank you very much. Best of luck on your book. I look forward to reading it. No pressure for you either.

[1:17:14.1] **AVH:** Yeah. Yeah. Exactly, exactly. Yeah. All right, Tara. Thank you so much and maybe we'll do a part two at some point.

[1:17:20.0] **TC:** Okay. Take care, Ashleigh.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:17:26.3] **AVH:** All right, everybody. That's a wrap. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. I hope you check out our new sponsor, Wild Foods at wildfoods.co and use our awesome discount code 'paleomag' to get 12% off all your healthy goodies. I hope you'll leave a review for the podcast, ideally a nice one. If not a nice one, at least a helpful one. I mean, I got one bad review recently that made fun of the way I spell my name, which honestly more than anything seems deeply unhelpful. I can't say I appreciated that one.

If you do have feedback aside from things that are on my birth certificate and you want to give me any suggestions, you can send me an e-mail at ashleigh@paleomagazine.com. Tell me who you want to see on the podcast, or what you want me to talk about and I would be happy to have a conversation with you.

Thank you again to Tara. It was an incredible conversation. I'm going to re-listen to this one and I don't always do that for podcasts, because I can't stand listening to my own voice, but it'll be worth it on this one.

Join me next week. I am finally, better late than never, chatting with the author of *Genius Foods* and his new book, *The Genius Life*. I'm talking to Max Lugavere next week. You do not want to miss it. Thanks for being here, everybody and have a fantastic week.

[OUTRO]

[1:18:33.9] AVH: The intro music for Paleo Magazine Radio is a song called 'Stronger' performed by Alter Ego and I hope you love it.

[END]