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Waubesa Press

P.O. Box 192 Oregon, WI 53575 Phone/fax/data: (800) 928-2372

Online catalog: <http://www.badgerbooks.com>

E-Mail: books@badgerbooks.com

'YOU SHOOT IT, YOU EAT IT'

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Growing up on a farm requires a different set of rules than those of an urban household. In the Isherwood family, a rule to control excessive hunting of small animals by the children was: "You shoot it, you eat it."

Fifth generation central Wisconsin potato farmer Justin Isherwood highlights the unusual aspects of growing up rural in his new book, *Farm Kid* (ISBN: 1-932542-15-9. \$16.95), published by Badger Books.

Many aspects of Isherwood's upbringing are alien territory for city folk, but evoke lots of memories for those raised rural. For example:

-- The Rattlesnake Patrol was a mutant form of the Boy Scouts that offered merit badges for silo filling, haying or milking cows.

-- Cats were abundant and sometimes used in experiments involving aerial trajectory.

-- Isherwood's dad invested in an electric fence because the "five-strand barb wire drawn up to a tensile pitch didn't sufficiently interfere with green-corn neurons in the cow brain." Of course, Dad had to test it himself first before buying.

-- No music that jangles, bangles or booms was allowed in the barn so as not to "excite the loins of the lower animals."

-- The top of a manure pile was a great place to watch the stars on a cold winter night.

Once a farm kid, always a farm kid, Isherwood says.

"The farm kid soul is a hard thing to shake," he writes. "I've seen people try, then when they are alone you find them talking to a tree."

Isherwood is the author of many short stories and books on rural life. Review copies of Farm Kid are available and interviews with the author can be arranged by calling Mary Lou Santovec at 800-928-2372. More information also can be found at www.badgerbooks.com.

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Contact Information:

Mary Lou Santovec

Marketing Manager

Badger Books Inc.

800-928-2372

marylou@badgerbooks.com