TODD CHURCHILL  
*President and Co-Owner, Thousand Hills Cattle Company*

Todd Churchill grew up on a farm south of Moline, Ill, where his family raised row crops, cattle, and horses. He graduated with a degree in Speech-Communications from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., and completed additional coursework in accounting at the University of Minnesota.

After working in public accounting for several years, he formed his first company, called CFO Insights, LLC. That company provided part-time CFO (Chief Financial Officer) services on a contract basis to startups and small businesses. During a period of eight years, he functioned as the CFO and/or VP-Administration of more than 90 small companies, many in the agriculture industry. This provided incredible real-world experience to blend with his education in marketing, sales, communications, strategic planning, finance and accounting, and organizational management.

Todd started Thousand Hills Cattle Company (THCC) in early 2003, after reading an article in The New York Times Magazine by Michael Pollan, titled “This Steer’s Life.” This article described in detail the difference between conventionally raised cattle and 100% grass fed cattle. Todd realized that he (like many Americans) didn’t really eat beef anymore. This wasn’t a conscious decision – beef just didn’t taste the way he remembered it, and it didn’t digest well. Michael Pollan’s article got him thinking that maybe what he didn’t like was the impact of the confinement feedlot diet and experience on the flavor and quality of the beef.

This led Todd to find some grass-fed beef from very small producers in Minnesota, and the quality varied considerably. He eventually found a few farmer, ranchers and industry consultants that were raising consistent gourmet-quality, healthful, great-tasting grass-fed beef. Todd felt that if it could be produced consistently throughout the year, this was a product that many consumers in the Twin Cities would like to purchase. To this end, Todd created the THCC protocol, which describes the production practices required to raise cattle for THCC.

After only eight years, Todd and his team at THCC have built an incredibly diverse customer base of health food stores, premium grocers, restaurants, colleges, web merchants, and specialty butcher shops, primarily in the Twin Cities. In 2011, the growing interest in local and sustainable foods resulted in sales to more than 350 retail locations, restaurants, and over 30 public school districts in Minnesota.

Todd continues to lead THCC as the President/CEO, raise his own 100% grass-fed cattle, and work closely with existing and new farmers and ranchers, teaching them how to raise more 100% grass-fed beef.
In addition to his entrepreneurial endeavors, Todd and his wife, Dee, raise seven children, as well as assorted horses, ponies, chickens, dogs, cats and, of course, cattle on their farm near Cannon Falls, Minn.