2011 Fall Newsletter from the Snake River Farm

From: Tom Barthel
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2011 9:55 PM
To: Anderson, Mike <mnranders@gmail.com>
Subject: Fall Newsletter from the Snake River Farm

SNAKE RIVER FARM August 2011 Newsletter

BISON, CATTLE and damn fine HORSES **and Order Confirmation**

Tom Barthel & Gail Wilkinson
18251 62nd Street, SE
Becker, MN 55308 763 263 2721 tbarthel@clarus-medical.com see us on Facebook @ "Snake River Farm Minnesota"

Dear Mike Anderson
Please take the time to verify that I have your order correct as shown below.
For harvest this fall, you have the following on order.

Bison, ¼ early October, a second 1/3 early December, ½ total

Beef, None

Hog, ½ hog

Email works best for me for a bunch of reasons. Please communicate with me via email when you can.
If I do not have your eaddress, please send it to me.

The Fall Customer Day is Saturday September 24, from noon to sundown. Bring your family and friends.

Farm Update
I am writing this letter near the end of August
It has been an interesting summer for weather.
The frequent rains have been great for pastures and grass. The heat and humidity have been challenging.
In general we were able to provide comfortable environments for the animals.
For hogs that meant turning garden sprinklers in their pastures during hot afternoons. Hogs cannot sweat, in fact few creatures can other than horses and humans. I set the sprinklers to wet areas of good clean dirt.
The hogs churned that until they created a large bowl of cool, wet earth. They then burrowed in until their bodies were covered with mud.
On the hottest days they stayed in that situation until the evening cooled down.
Then they ate, drank and ran around with their buddies.
You could say that your hogs spent the summer in a resort and health spa.
The cattle need shade, good grazing and plenty of water. Those are easily provided here.
The cattle look excellent.
Bison just want some space. For much of the summer, I have allowed them to have two large pastures simultaneously. One is high and open and the other low and wooded. That is not the best for pasture management but I wanted the bison to have choices. They were able to select where they wanted to be at

different times of the day and night. They normally spent the night in the lowland where the vegetation was lush and the day in the open pasture where the insects were less.
Insects do bother the bison and this was a terrific year for insects, especially small flies.
Bison enjoy playing in water more than cattle but they do not use shade.
On a hot sunny day, cattle will crowd under any shade they can find.
Bison will ignore the shade and rest on a bare, south-facing slope.
Of course the buffalo are not fazed by winter weather either. They face into a blizzard and are perfectly comfortable at 40 below.

2011 Orders and Animal Numbers
We sold all the animals that we originally intended to raise this year by March 2nd. Because of that we added a few more beef and hogs. If you placed your order after March 2nd you may have been placed on a "wait list". The "wait list" for beef will almost certainly be satisfied. The hog "wait list" is not as certain. I may be an animal or two short when all is done. The number of animals we are growing this year is probably about the maximum I can and want to raise. Our customer retention rate is about 95% so that means we will not be able to take many new customers next year. I am not sure how I will work that out. Certainly, if you are a current customer we will continue to provide for you.
Those of you who purchase bison meat have received a number of emessages from me lately.
Bison prices are very high. Until bison prices come down, which may take a few years, we will limit sales to mostly animals that are born on our farm. That way I can hold your cost down to a rational level.

2011 Harvest Plans.
As in other years, will begin harvesting bison and beef in late September. Most will be harvested in October and the remainder in early December.
Hogs will be harvested in the last half of November.
In early November the butcher shop is filled with deer.
There is normally a seven to ten day period between harvesting and the time your meat is ready for pick-up.
That will be longer of course, if you have Quality process your meat into smoked hams or sausages etc.

Special Requests for Timing and Size.
Some of you ask for your bison or beef earlier or later in the fall. Some of you who order ½ each year would like ¼ early (September) and the 2nd ¼ late (December). Some of you want ¼ from a smaller or larger animal. I am happy to accommodate such requests but you need to let me know of your preferences. Otherwise I simply fill orders in the sequence that the orders were placed.
Beef
The beef we will harvest are all meat type heifers selected to grow and finish well on grass.
Bison
The bison for harvest this fall are all heifers. Most of them were born and raised here. Some are animals that we purchased as grass-fed yearlings. All our animals are of course, medication free.
The following applies to both Beef and Bison.
All quarters are similar. The butcher shop mixes fronts and backs to give everyone a variety of cuts.
You tell Quality Meats how to cut and package your meat.
You should pay us for the hanging weight before you pick up your meat.
You pay Quality Meats for the processing when you pick up your meat. About 60 cents per pound.
The folks at the butcher shop are very easy to get along with. Ask for Nancy or Beth.
If you are a new customer I tell them so and they will be particularly helpful.

Hogs. Our hogs in 2010 were big. Just about the size I have been trying to reach. The hogs are in pastures where they can eat green plants, roots and worms. In addition we grind and mix a unique blend of grains and other natural ingredients for them to eat. All local ingredients.
We started them off as baby pigs in late April. By harvest time in November, the hogs will reach a live weight of 400 pounds or more. The hanging weights were between 150 and 190 pounds per half.
Because they are outside and get a lot of exercise, the hogs grow strong and stay lean.
Because they get a varied and natural diet their meat is exceptionally tasty and high in good nutrients.

Farm Visits
Our **Fall Customer Day is Saturday, September 24th,** 2011 from noon until sundown.
We will have horses hitched for wagon and cart rides. You, your family and friends are invited. All events are informal and relaxed. No selling. Just a nice day in the country. You do not need to be a customer to attend.
All events are "rain or shine". We do not change our plans because of the weather, just our clothes.

Cancelling Your Order
You can cancel or decrease your order anytime. No explanation is needed.
These are hard economic times for many of us. Last year a few families cancelled or reduced their orders. That was not a problem because they informed me before harvest. I just moved the next person up on the schedule. If you do need to cancel, it is much easier for me if you do so before your animal is harvested. If you simply inform us that you have changed your mind I can just move to someone else on the schedule. If you wait until I have harvested and sent an invoice to you, it gets a lot messier for me.

If you are not on our email list, please send me your email address if you have one. That way I can keep you informed of special events and offers. I will not abuse it and I do not share your information with others.
We have found that our customer retention rate is about 80% for customers who do not get email and over 95% for those who do. Fortunately we have eaddresses for most of you.
Email works best for me. **tbarthel@clarus-medical.com**
Or, if you prefer, call us at 763 263 2721 and leave a message. We are not in the house much.
Best regards and thank you. Tom Barthel

More Notes from the Farm

Killdeer in Flocks
We have always had a lot of wildlife at the farm. In large part that is due to the varied habitat; riparian, to upland to open field. But each year since we switched the open fields from corn to pasture the wildlife has increased. That is especially true for birds in the restored prairie.
There have always been killdeer around but this year for the first time I am seeing flocks of Killdeer. Killdeer are an attractive ground nesting bird that scoots off dragging a wing pretending the wing is broken. It does that in order to lure predators, including humans away from its nest or chicks. They do a good job of acting too. I have been seeing killdeer in pastures since I was a young boy bringing home my father's milk cows but after all these years I am still tempted to follow them.
The chicks are flightless for about a month but they are good runners within a day of birth. There have always been a few Killdeer around but now our population is so high that there is a flock of forty in the south prairie.
Nature is incredibly resilient.

Wet Meadows
A wet meadow is a poorly drained area that is populated by native plants and grasses. It is not a swamp.

I have been nurturing wet meadows at the Snake River Farm for many years. Long ago I blocked the man-made drainage channels. That brought the water level up close to the surface. Careful rotational grazing helps to improve the meadows in number of ways but primarily by keeping brushy plants in check.
This summer has been a grand year for wet meadows. They have bloomed luxuriously since spring. Starting with trilliums violets, marsh marigolds, anemones, bluebells and then changing to jewelweed, vervain, joe-pye weed, boneset, thistles o many types, milkweeds, asters, goldenrod, gentian, phlox, bergamot, coneflowers, strawflowers, golden alexanders and many more.
Lately I have had many opportunities to walk through the meadows checking fences after wind storms. Each time, I got soaked up to my chest pushing my way through the luscious growth of vegetation. High rubber boots and lots of DEET a required but it has been well worth the trouble. It seems like standing in a flower vase.
If you would like to see a wet meadow, we have a small but easily accessible one just off the edge of the lawn, east of the house. We mow walking paths through it so no boots are required and you won't get soaked. I have added seeds of a few plant species to this meadow but most of the indigenous plants simply came back to life after we quit mowing it about 20 years ago.
Nature is incredibly resilient.

Monarch Butterflies

The number of monarchs has been down for a couple years. If I recall correctly some of their wintering sites in Mexico froze a few years ago.
This year the monarch numbers seem to be back to normal.
We have several types of milkweeds on the farm. Milkweeds actually have very beautiful and aromatic blossoms. Of cour they are a favored food of monarchs and many other butterflies plus humming birds.
I encourage milkweeds on the farm. They are numerous but not overly so. Both the bison and the cattle will selectively graze them despite the fact that all the textbooks warn that milkweeds are poisonous to cattle.
They are not of course, unless like almost anything else they are taking in excess.
I learn a lot from books. But there is a lot in books that is wrong. Some author/experts need to get out more.
I saw many more yellow than orange monarchs this summer. Does anyone know why?

The following is stuff I picked off the Internet.

Some of the highlights are;

1. **Naturally raised meat varies compared to factory meat. You would expect that.**
2. **Gras-fed meat is has more taste. Of course.**
3. **Grass-fed meat is tenderest if cooked less. The surest way to make meat tough is overcooking.**
4. **Stress free pasture harvest produces better meat.**
5. **Animals fatten naturally on fall grasses.**

Achieving Culinary Success with Grass-fed Beef

By Katherine Czapp

Cattle raised and finished on pasture represent a tiny proportion of the beef produced for the table in the United States. Mo grassfed beef producers are family farmers who sell their meat directly to customers, consumers who prefer grass-fed animal products for health and taste reasons (not to mention environmental and animal welfare concerns) that are obvious when 100 percent cattle pasturing is compared to the industrial, confinement feedlot model.

A Challenge for the Cook

As far as the cook is concerned, however, grassfed beef requires understanding another facet of the art of cooking, since b its very nature grassfed beef does not reflect the same standards of uniform production protocols that commercial feedlots strive to create. The industrial model of beef production favors only certain cattle breeds (such as modern Angus and Hereford) that will produce a lot of meat on a compact body in as short a period of time as possible, on the least amount o feed necessary—that is, as cheaply as possible. The subtle qualities of that meat—such as the development of complex

flavors or its health benefits—are overlooked. The industry requires only that its product taste "beefy," and that as a result of enforced immobility and the short life of the animal it is tender and suitable for mostly quick, high-heat cooking metho By contrast, there is quite a wide range of variety in grassfed beef, which is noticeable from farm to farm. Broader diversi in any food category means more choice for the diner, something we can be ever thankful for. This variety is in part due t differences in the cattle breeds, and in particular to the genetics of the cattle on each farm. While certain breeds are more suited for meat production, such as the older Angus stock and some of the heritage breeds like the Galloways, Highlands and Devons, a knowledgeable farmer with a good eye who raises a few beef just for the family and some neighbors can nevertheless choose a properly proportioned Holstein or Jersey from his dairy stock and raise an animal with exceptional meat qualities. It all depends on the care of the well-chosen animal for this purpose.

Forage will also have a great influence on the flavor of the meat, and will produce "stronger" tasting meat than beef produced from a concentrated grain diet thanks to the influences of the odorous constituents, reactive polyunsaturated fatt acids and chlorophyll in the variety of forage plants. The cow's rumen transforms these elements into terpenes—chemical related to compounds in herbs and spices—which subtly flavor the meat and fat, especially in a mature animal.

Cattle on pasture will naturally take longer to "finish"—that is, complete growth with adequate intramuscular fat (marblin and reach the stage for slaughter—which may be from 18 to 30 months (or even more) as compared to as young as 12 to 1 months on average for feedlot animals. Pastured animals will be exercised animals, and therefore generally leaner and wit "tougher" meat because of the greater diameter in muscle fibers and amount of connective tissue their exercise induces th bodies to create. This meat also has the very desirable characteristics of juiciness and deep flavor. As Harold McGee sums up in *On Food and Cooking*: "Full-flavored meat comes from animals that have led a full life. . . Life intensifies flavor, ar modern meat animals are living less and less."

Animals raised in confinement are generally slaughtered before reaching adulthood, when muscle growth slows down (an intramuscular fat starts accumulating at a greater rate).The rapid growth of immature animals coupled with little exercise means connective tissue is continually being broken down and restructured, rather than developing into strong cross-links and sheaths as it does in a mature, active animal grazing on pasture. Rapid growth also means a high level of protein-digesting enzymes is present in the muscles of immature animals, which after slaughter help to tenderize their meat and actually reduce the need for much of an aging process. Shortening the time spent on any aspect of the beef production mo is of course music to ears of the industry. The resulting feedlot meat may be yielding, but still fairly lean (young grain-fattened animals will put down a thicker outer coating of fat rather than intramuscularly), not be necessarily juicy, and wit a mild flavor in need of saucing.

In other beef-eating countries, however, traditional tastes have been different. "According to a standard French handbook, *Technologie Culinaire* (1995)," states Harold McGee in On Cooking, "the meat of an animal less than two years old is 'completely insipid,' while meat 'at the summit of quality' comes from a steer three or four years old."

The Tenderness Controversy

What creates tenderness in beef and what makes meat tough? We've mentioned some of the contributing factors, such as breed, type of forage, exercise and age of the animal. There is also the long-held belief that fat marbling is essential for tenderness, but visible marbling may actually account for a much smaller variation in meat tenderness—as little as 10 percent in some food science estimations—and is not necessarily the best predictor of meat quality. More important factor affecting the tenderness of meat concern the complex interplay of factors that occur around the time of slaughter, and include stress before and at the time of killing, and how the meat is handled after slaughter (the aging process).

Even the tenderest cuts on an animal can end up tough due to stress at the time of slaughter. The most humane methods of slaughter will, fortunately, produce the best results in the meat. Why this is so depends upon understanding the relationshi of glycogen and lactic acid to pH decline (rise in acidity) in meat after slaughter. An animal that has not been stressed wil have normal levels of stored energy, or glycogen in its body. When the animal is slaughtered and bled, the metabolic processes continue for a time, however there is no longer circulating oxygen. Without the presence of oxygen, the breakdown of glycogen/glucose results in a buildup of lactic acid which then causes a rise in the acidity of the meat. This acidity normally helps retard growth of microorganisms after slaughter, and sets the stage for the aging process to begin properly.

If, on the other hand, the animal has used up its glycogen stores before slaughter because of the trauma of physical crowding, transport stress, rough handling or fear, the pH in the meat may not drop quickly enough after slaughter becaus

not enough lactic acid can be produced. In this case the meat will be very dry, tough and dark in color, and will be more susceptible to spoiling and contamination.

Influence of Aging

Very rapid chilling immediately after slaughter causes the muscle fibers to shorten. These tightly contracted muscle bundl resist stretching in the hanging carcass and produce tough meat. In *Everything I Want to Do Is Illegal*, Joel Salatin explain why U.S. government regulations on post-slaughter carcass temperatures are ruining artisan beef production: "When a ste is slaughtered, the muscle tissue releases an enzyme called calpain. This enzyme keeps the fibers from shrinking, or tightening, and instead makes them relax. Activated by calcium and only viable in ambient room temperature, this enzym works for only a couple of hours after an animal dies. But if the fibers get cold, it shuts down. One of the biggest problem in the grass-finished beef business is tough tissue, which many experts have blamed on insufficient intramuscular fat, or marbling.

"Yet hunters know that very lean venison and elk is tender, with virtually no intramuscular fat. What's the difference? Th difference is that wild game usually stays out at ambient temperature for hours before being chilled. By the time the hunter . . . gets it to refrigeration, the meat has been out for hours, allowing calpain its maximum tenderizing function.

"Under government inspection, however, the regulations require [that] the carcasses must be in the chill room blasted by frigid air within one hour of slaughter. An animal that doesn't comply is automatically discarded. . . When one of my gras finished animals is shoved into a chill room next to one of these [feedlot] fat carcasses, the internal temperature will drop much faster than the next door neighbor with a 200-pound coat of fat. As a result . . . the regulations inherently chill the leaner pasture-finished carcasses down . . . too fast. The faster cooling deactivates the calpain, which stops the tissue relaxation, which creates tough meat."

Marinades of Herb Pastes

There is quite a bit of debate about how marinades work to tenderize meat, or even if they can achieve that goal at all. The theory—that acidic ingredients in the marinade break down collagen prior to cooking—has been shown to be only nominally true. Marinades tend to penetrate only a few millimeters into the meat and over marinating produces a gray and mushy (not tender) meat exterior. However, marinades have been used for centuries to prepare meat for cooking, and traditional ingredients have been acidic liquids such as wine, beer, vinegar, kvas, and cultured milk, with the addition of aromatic herbs that also contain antibiotic oils, such as thyme, marjoram, rosemary, oregano, and garlic and onions. It has been my suspicion that the marinade, while imparting marvelous flavors, really provides a safe environment for the meat t continue its natural aging process.

A way to enhance the power of the marinade as a safe aging medium is to be sure to allow enough time for the meat to ag in the marinade if keeping the meat in the refrigerator. You can also boost the enzyme activity by marinating at room temperature. A roast can marinate a couple of days in the refrigerator, for example, but take it out the night before the day you'll cook it and let it marinate at room temperature for that final period. Most meat-aging enzymes will start to denature and lose activity between about 105° and 122°F, but will work faster the closer they come to that range. This means that aging enzymes will also be working as the meat slowly heats up during the cooking itself.

In the case of steaks and thinner cuts of meat, I utilize an herb paste for the same purpose—to allow the meat to age furthe while slathered with aromatic herbs and raw olive oil. My method for two rib steaks (about 7 -8 ounces each) is to pound 7 cloves of garlic in a mortar with fresh thyme, marjoram, pepper corns, a dab of coarse prepared mustard, and a couple o tablespoons of raw olive oil to achieve a paste the consistency of thick mayonnaise. I coat the steaks with this herb paste, cover loosely and refrigerate for 24 to 48 hours. Not only the refrigerator, but your whole kitchen will smell of this wonderful concoction, which is part of the pleasure. I let the steaks finish marinating at room temperature for about eight hours before cooking them over a wood fire. Many home experiments have proved that the herb paste application produce more tender steaks than meat merely thawed in the refrigerator overnight and promptly cooked the next day.

Keys to Preparing Grassfed Beef

There are a few basic principles to keep in mind when preparing grassfed beef, and these are primarily dependent upon ho long or how well the meat has been aged, the fat content of the meat, and the type of muscle you will be cooking. The coo can decide whether to age the meat further in the kitchen, or to employ a mechanical means to tenderize the meat (more about this later on). Since fat is an insulator and most grassfed beef is fairly lean, the meat will cook more quickly than "conventional" beef almost regardless of the cut, and one must always be aware of this limiting factor. Also, depending on the animal and the age when it was finished, cuts from different animals can vary quite a bit in size, which will of course change their cooking requirements. This means it is less important for you to try to time your recipes than to carefully che on the meat's progress by monitoring its internal temperature and know when to halt the cooking process. Purchasing a good quality meat thermometer is an excellent way to improve your outcome as you learn just how quickly meats can reac doneness.

An internal temperature of 120° is rare; 125°-130°F medium rare—and most grassfed beef will taste best and be at its juiciest and most tender when cooked to no more than rare or medium rare. Be aware, too, that meat continues to cook eve when removed from the heat source. It is wise to stop the cooking just short (10° or so) of your desired temperature.

It will help to become accustomed to using lower oven and stovetop temperatures. A matter of a few degrees and a minute or two can mean the difference between perfectly juicy, tender meat and a dried out, cardboard-like failure for dry heat methods. Very low temperatures used in moist-heat methods give you more leeway, but careful monitoring is still the watchword.

Learn where cuts come from on the animal. Useful charts can be found in numerous cookbooks to help you understand wh sort of muscle meat you have and which method (dry or moist heat) will produce the most satisfactory results. If you can imagine a steer grazing on pasture in your mind's eye, you will see that the parts of the body doing the most work are the neck, shoulders and legs. Chuck, shoulder and blade cuts come from the shoulder portion and are tough as they contain quite a bit of connective tissue that must be cooked long enough to dissolve into gelatin. This is also true for the arm, shan and brisket cuts. All of these cuts will benefit from moist heat cooking methods, such as gentle stewing, braising and pot roasting.

Mechanical Tenderizing

Besides kitchen-aging of meat, use of marinades and slow, low heat cooking methods, there is also the mechanical approa to tenderizing meat. This includes pounding meat with a meat hammer, using a larding needle, and using a blade-type tenderizer. Pounding beef briefly, taking care not to cause loss of juices or flattening too much, can be done prior to marinating to help with tissue breakdown.

Honing A Culinary Art

Producing and preparing grass-finished beef seems to be a continuous learning experience for all those who choose to participate in this adventure. Like anything that is done well, superior results come from constant investigation, trial and error, and keen attention to the details. We can be grateful to the passionate farmers who enrich our lives with nutritious food. Our reward is in the eating!

SIDEBAR

Autumn is the time to harvest grass-finished beef—this is the lesson we can learn from the tradition of native peoples who hunted bison on this continent. As summer turns to fall the animals' natural feeding selection is maturing grasses going to seed, and is the key to the laying down of fat—delicious, satisfying fat—for the winter.

SNAKE RIVER FARM **Introductory Letter, August 2011**
BISON, CATTLE, HOGS and damn fine HORSES
Tom Barthel & Gail Wilkinson
18251 62nd Street, SE
Becker, MN 55308 763 263 2721 tbarthel@clarus-medical.com see us on Facebook @ "Snake River Farm Minnesota"

Pasture Grown Bison, Beef and Hogs.
This letter is an introduction to Snake River Farm.
You should find it useful for details of how we raise animals and do business.
Please pass this letter on to a friend that could become a customer.

Our Goals
To humanely raise and harvest our animals,
to be good stewards of our land,
to grow delicious healthy meat,
to sell that meat at a fair price
and to provide authentic country experiences to our customers.

The Snake River Farm.
The Farm consists of 225 acres located in the center of Sherburne County.
We are 50 miles northwest of Minneapolis and 20 miles east of St. Cloud.
The Farm is a mixture of open pasture, native prairie, oak savanna, wet meadows and lowland.
The Snake River, a small, beautiful stream, winds through the farm for a mile.
We have divided the farm into twenty-four pastures.
We rotate our herds through the pastures according to the seasons.
In addition to farm buildings, we have a fully functional one-room schoolhouse, a museum of farm and household tools, and a playground for kids.
We enjoy using our horses to give wagon and bobsled rides.

Animals we raise.
We keep only as many animals as our grazing land can handle.
We raise bison, cattle and hogs for direct sale to consumers.
In 2011, we intend to harvest and sell 15 bison, 50 beef and 60 hogs.
We keep about ten horses for enjoyment and for farm work. Most of our horses are mustangs.
All of our horses are trained to ride and drive.
All of our animals live in a natural environment. The animals are in herds that meet their social needs.
Our bison and beef eat only grass and grass hay throughout the year.
We raise our hogs in large outdoor pasture-lots.
Our hogs are raised on a special mixed diet as suits their nature.
We us only natural feeds which do not contain medications or antibiotics.
Our hog feed is mixed and ground on the farm from locally grown grains.
We have no feedlots or handling pens. Our animals have plenty of space at all times.
A typical pasture has both high and low ground, trees for shade and running water.
Our animals are relaxed and healthy. They grow slowly compared to grain-fed or feedlot-fed animals.
We harvest most of our bison and beef animals between 18 and 30 months of age.
We harvest hogs at about 8 months.

How and when we Harvest.

We harvest our animals humanely. We do, on the farm, pasture harvesting. Pasture harvest, means we kill the animal in the pasture then haul them immediately to Quality Meats in Foley for butchering and processing.
Pasture harvesting minimizes handling and trauma for the animals. It also maintains meat taste and quality because the animals are not in a state of stress.
We harvest our bison and beef animals between September and December for many good and natural reasons.
We harvest all of our hogs in November.
Quality Meats is a state inspected facility.

How we sell our Meat.

We sell bison and beef by the quarter and hogs by the half.
We price our meat based on hanging weight. Hanging weight is the weight of the meat after the animal is butchered but before the meat is cut, ground and wrapped.
The folks at Quality Meats in Foley determine the hanging weight on their calibrated scale.
Bison quarters in 2011 will range between 90 and 120 pounds hanging weight.
Beef quarters in 2011 will be 130 to 170 pounds hanging weight.
All quarters are mixed. That means all quarters from a given animal are equal. No front or hindquarters. Every quarter buyer gets essentially the same meat.
You tell Quality meats how you want your meat cut and wrapped.
Hog hanging weight is between 130 and 180 pounds per half. For 2010, the average hog half was 161 pounds.

How you pay for your meat.

We do not require a deposit, just your honest intention to purchase the meat.
When your animal is harvested, I will send an invoice.
You should pay that amount to us via check before you pick up your meat.
The folks at Quality Meats are very helpful and easy to work with.
They will process and package your meat any way you like. Processing averages about 60 cents per hanging pound.
You pay us, (Snake River Farm) for the meat and you pay Quality Meats for the processing.

We do all we can to make this easy and simple for you.

You are welcome and encouraged to visit the farm. We have both Spring and Fall Customer days, but if those dates are not convenient for you, you are welcome to visit any time we are home.
There is no penalty for changing or cancelling your order but please tell us of a change before we harvest your animal.
The day after your animal has been harvested; we will mail an invoice and a processing instruction form to you.
The processing form makes it simple and easy for you to tell the folks at Quality Meats exactly how you want your meat processed and packaged.
Do not be anxious if this is your first time buying meat this way. We and Quality Meats make it easy for you.
A quarter of bison or beef, or a half of hog will require about three cubic feet of freezer space. It will fit easily into a small chest freezer, the kind that sells for around $250. Gail has one that has been running perfectly in our unheated garage for over ten years.
If you wish, we can pick-up your meat after processing and deliver it to you. As long as we can arrange a time that allows me to combine several errands into one trip. I am happy to bring the meat to your house or meet you at a prearranged location. Normally there is no charge for mutually convenient delivery.

Our 2011 Prices. For orders placed after 3/26/2011

First a few words about prices in general. If you are searching to buy meat in bulk to get the lowest possible price, we may not have what you want. We are not raising a commodity. Our prices are very reasonable for grass fed animals, raised and harvested humanely. It takes longer and it costs more to raise animals naturally. Naturally raised animals produce healthier meat.
Pound per pound you get more healthy nutrients from our meat.
Hanging weight price for **bison is $4.50** per pound, **beef is $2.50** per pound and **pork is $2.00** per pound.

More about the Farm and the Fall and Spring Customer Days.
Our Spring Customer Day was **Saturday May 21, 2011** from noon until sundown.
Our Fall Customer Day is **Saturday September 24**, from noon to sundown. Bring your family and friends.
The farm is 225 acres of beautiful mixed countryside. There are picnic areas, a playground, a farm museum, chickens to feed, a furnished one-room schoolhouse and more.
Of course, you will be able to see all the animals up close, including the bison.
On the Customer Days and at many other times during the year we hitch horses to wagons or bobsleds and give rides through the farm.

Email works best for contacting us. **tbarthel@clarus-medical.com**
If you prefer, our phone has an answering machine. 763 263 2721.
Best Regards and thank you for your interest. Tom Barthel