

**2013****BISON, CATTLE, HOGS and damn fine HORSES**

Tom Barthel &amp; Gail Wilkinson

18251 62<sup>nd</sup> Street, SEBecker, MN 55308 763 263 2721 [snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.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 (Plus grassfed lambs from Sand Hill Farm) for direct sale to consumers.

In 2013, we intend to harvest and sell 15 bison, 75 beef and 85 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 use only natural feeds which do not contain medications or antibiotics.

Our hog feed is mixed and ground on the farm by us, 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. Normally that means, on the farm, pasture harvesting. Pasture harvest, means we kill the animal in the pasture then transport them immediately to Quality Meats in Foley for butchering and processing.

Pasture harvesting eliminates 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 most of our bison and beef animals from early September until early December for many good and natural reasons. We harvest a few animals in June primarily for ground meat.

We harvest all of our hogs in October and November.

Quality Meats is a state inspected facility.

#### **How we sell our Meat.**

We sell most of our bison and beef by the quarter and hogs by the half. We harvest a few select animals for ground meat only. Those animals are sold in smaller portions generally yielding about 30 pounds of finished ground meat.

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 2013 will range between 90 and 150 pounds hanging weight.

Beef quarters in 2012 will be 120 to 170 pounds hanging weight. You can request larger or smaller quarters.

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 cuts of meat.

Hog hanging weight is between 120 and 180 pounds per half. Again you may request a smaller or larger half.

You tell Quality meats how you want your meat cut and wrapped.

#### **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 work to make this easy and simple for you.**

You are welcome and encouraged to visit the farm. We have Winter, 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 2013 Prices.**

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 \$5.00** per pound, **beef is \$3.00** per pound, **pork is \$2.10** per pound, and **lamb (from Sand Hill Farm) is \$5** per pound. Bison and beef sold for ground meat only are normally priced \$0.50 per pound lower.

#### **More about the Farm and the Fall and Spring Customer Days.**

Our Spring Customer Day is **Saturday May 18, 2013** from noon until sundown.

Our Fall Customer Day is **Saturday September 21**, from noon to sundown. Bring your family and friends.

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. [snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com)

If you prefer, our phone has an answering machine. 763 263 2721.

Best Regards and thank you for your interest. Tom Barthel