

2013 Mid July Update

From: Tom Barthel
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2013 8:42 PM
To: Tom Barthel <snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>
Subject: Mid July Update.

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

I apologize for the lapse in updates and messages.
I will send several catch-up letters in the next week or two.

The past six weeks have been terrifically busy.
A combination of the late spring and your overwhelming demand for June ground beef.
There was one other complicating factor. We had seven groups visit and tour the farm in June.
Those groups included, home schoolers, 4 H clubs, the staff from Gale Woods, the Woodland Women Network, an agriculture advisors group from the U of M and an international group of educators who were in Minnesota for the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference.
Those folks were very interesting and the tours were great fun.
I do not know how I could have turned any of them down, but next year I will do a better job of spacing them out.

Almost 120 of you ordered ground beef in June.

I initially planned to harvest seven animals for that purpose.
I harvested five in 2012 but I knew demand was up.
You asked for so much meat that I harvested fifteen. Even so, there were some late orders I could not fill.
I will send a comprehensive report on the topic of June beef in a couple days.
Many of you took advantage of the broth bones, marrow bones, ox-tails and tallow that were offered with the June beef.
I will send a letter of suggestions on how to cook, render and use those items.
You can also learn a lot from Sarah's blog, www.sandhillfarmsarah.wordpress.com

We are very close to sold out for 2013.

At this time, you have ordered 75 beef animals, 94 hogs and 13 bison.
(Sarah has had a WAIT list for lamb since early spring.)
That is roughly 95% of what we will produce in 2013.

All future orders that we accept will be on a WAIT list basis.

That does not mean we do not intend to have the animal available.
It means that if something goes wrong and we lose an animal or more, the orders on WAIT list may not be filled.
FYI, in past years we have been able to fill virtually all WAIT listed orders.

Many of you had a wet May.
We did not.

In fact, our rains have been spotty. They have been adequate and well timed, however.
Good timing of rainfall, coupled with careful pasture management have given us the best grass crop ever.
Let us hope that continues.

The grazing herds are doing exceptionally well on the good grass.
Heat can be a problem for animals just as it can be for us.
We take measures to keep the animals comfortable.
The beef, bison and horse herds have shade as needed and plentiful water.
The hog pastures each have a sprinkler. We turn the sprinklers on whenever the temperature is above 80 degrees.
The pigs are comfortable.
Actually, the pigs are deliriously happy.
They bask, wallow and play likes kids at the beach.

In August I will send processing sheets and other information to prepare you for the fall harvest.
We will harvest more animals this fall than last year. This year we about the maximum number we can raise and harvest in a year.
To smooth the workload I will start harvesting beef and bison two weeks earlier than in the past.
Starting in early September and finishing about December first.
In the past, we have harvested all the hogs in November.
This fall I will harvest hogs in October and November.

I will post photos of the bunnies, chicks, ducks, turkeys, red wattle piglets etc. on facebook soon.
They are all growing fast.
Our facebook page is "Snake River Farm Minnesota."

It has been a busy year but I am not complaining.
It has been an excellent year to be a grass farmer.
Thank you for supporting the Snake River Farm.
We are all well and I hope your family is the same.
Best regards.
Tom

p.s. Fall Farm Day is September 21.
Put that on your calendar.