

## 2014 Early March Update Price increase coming

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

1. **Many of you have already ordered but if you have not, yes, it is time to place your summer and fall 2014 orders including ground beef.**

Some of you missed the January letter and express confusion about when to order. Order now if you wish. Email me if you need information.

2. **Price increase coming for beef on orders placed after March 31<sup>st</sup>.**

The price for beef calves has reached record highs. I will soon start buying beef calves to grow for harvest in the fall.

I am very sensitive to the fact that many of you are under economic pressure. Nevertheless, the farm must be profitable to be sustainable.

*The 2014 price for beef orders placed after March 31 will be \$3.25 per hanging weight pound.*

The 2014 price for beef quarters ordered by or before March 31<sup>st</sup> will remain at \$3.

I do not anticipate a price increase for beef sold by the 1/10<sup>th</sup> for ground beef. That will remain at \$2.50 per pound.

I do not expect any other price increases in 2014.

3. **Laura sent this message about lard rendering.** I rendered my lard last weekend in the oven too, except I used 250 and the lard turned out very nice. I was done canning by 8 pm after starting in the early afternoon. Not much for cracklings either and no raw taste.

So my point, a higher temp can be used with no smoking problem, and a little faster.

**NOTE from Tom.** Obviously 250 works fine. The difference between 250 and a lower temperature is primarily safety. Pork fat melts at a temperature over 120 degrees. Working lard at lower temperature takes longer but is safer. You decide.

4. **Gary sent a message and link about bees in response to my letter about soil biology and crop rotation.**

The move away from classic rotation with alfalfa has also had an enormous impact on honeybees and is a key component of the multifaceted cause of colony collapse disorder (along with the increased pesticide use). In case you didn't know, our very own University of Minnesota has one of the world's leading experts on honeybees, [Marla Spivak](#). Here's a link to [her work](#) plus a few others trying to help solve this very problem. I am collaborating with one of her [inspired](#) offshoots to try to help monitor local hives in order to study and improve the situation in our state. Ironically, urban bees are faring better and producing more honey than rural ones.

5. **Stuart sent the following link to a positive wildlife video.** It is a beautiful short film:

<http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/how-wolves-change-rivers/>

**I attended a two-day Midwest Soil Summit last week and a grazing seminar the week before.** That wraps up my winter conferences with the exception of the Minnesota Buffalo Conference.

That is OK. I have many new things to work on when spring comes. Spring will come. Soon. I promise.

I have decided to not seek or accept a fourth term as secretary and director of the Buffalo Association. I have enjoyed being on the board but I believe in term limits. Besides it is time for someone younger.

**Spring Farm Day. Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.** Details in a later message.

6. I am posting photos on **Facebook** at regular intervals. Check them out.

**Link to our Facebook page.**

[Snake River Farm Minnesota on Facebook](#)

We are all well. I hope you are the same.

Best regards.

Tom