

2014 Late September Update

From: Tom Barthel

Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 10:03 PM

To: Tom Barthel <Snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>

Subject: Late September Update

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

The fall weather has been delightful.

I hope you are enjoying it.

I sure am

Harvesting is going well and on schedule. More than half of the beef and bison have been harvested.

Pork harvest starts in a few weeks. Lambs, October 30.

[Fall 2014 Harvest Schedule](#)

I have made a detailed schedule through the end of the harvest.

If you need to know exactly where you are on that, email me.

Fall Customer day was great fun. Between 250 and 300 of you attended. The weather was simply beautiful until 5 p.m. Then a thunderstorm brought the fun to a speedy end. Some folks were waiting for a wagon ride when the rain came. Sorry we did not get to you. Four good horses, many helpers and I did all we could.

We will bobsled this winter and do it all again on Spring Farm Day.

I intend to post some photos on the farm facebook page.

[Snake River Farm Minnesota on Facebook](#)

I know I should have done that sooner.

Too much to do on these fine fall days.

The balance of the chickens are scheduled for harvest this week and next. We will be able to fill all orders and probably fill many late requests as well.

If you ordered chickens, rabbits or turkeys, you should be receiving separate emessages from me on that topic.

The animals, bison, cattle, hogs and lambs continue to be growing and flourishing exceedingly well.

This has been a good year for the livestock.

Last Friday Gail and I took a long drive to Blue Mounds State Park.

Blue Mounds is past Pipestone, near Luverne in the southwest corner of our state.

The State has a herd of bison in the park. The Park has grazing lands for around 100 bison. Of course, bison tend to reproduce. Each fall the Park auctions bison to keep the herd manageable. Gail and I enjoy the drive and the auction. Last year we bought three bison.

This year we bought two. A yearling bull and a yearling heifer.

We decided to designate this young bull Bob.

I do not mean just bob, but Bob the Buffalo Bull.

Some of you may not understand the significance of being Bob the Buffalo Bull of Snake River Farm. It is potentially a very important position.

I will explain.

We keep only a small herd of bison. Small enough that we need only one mature breeding bull.

That herd bull is always named Bill.

Bill the Buffalo Bull is his full name.

Our current Bill is nine years old.

He has been Bill for six years.

Before that, he was Bob.

Bison (buffalo) bulls, like cattle bulls tend to get meaner as they get older.

Not all bulls get mean as they age, but many do.

I keep a young bull, a Bob, on hand for the day when Bill gets ornery.

Until or unless that happens, Bill stays.

I do not want to change herd bulls unnecessarily. An experienced herd bull is an asset. For examples, Bill does a great job of helping me lead the herd to greener pastures. He also informs me in clear terms when the grazing in a pasture is inadequate. Of course, one must assume he takes his paternal duties seriously also.

Bob can only wait a year or two. I do not allow Bob or any other young bull to get large enough to challenge Bill. Bulls fight and when they do, they can fight right through fences.

I do not need bison on the loose.

Bill got his promotion from Bob to Bill soon after his predecessor chased me through a copse of trees.

Bison are anatomically different from cattle.

One significant way that difference shows up is in turning ability.

Bull fighting works with cattle in part because a running bull cannot change direction quickly.

The Matador holds the cape and then steps safely aside as the bull charges forward.

That technique would not work with bison.

The powerful front shoulders and small hips of a bison allow them to turn pretty much on a dime.

A mean tempered, 1800 pound bull can stay in hot pursuit through and around a stand of trees.

The previous Bill did.

Sometimes you can win the fight but lose the battle.

In this particular case, Bill became a lot of tasty hamburger.

Gail and I decided to keep a young, Blue Mounds Bob on hand from now on.

It will give us a reason to make that scenic trip to Luverne each fall.

Email me if you have questions about your order.

Best regards

Tom

p.s. I will get some Bill and Bob photos on facebook soon. Honest.

Link to our Facebook page.

[Snake River Farm Minnesota on Facebook](#)