

2014 March St Patricks Day Update

From: Tom Barthel
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2014 3:22 PM
To: Tom Barthel <Snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>
Subject: St Patrick's Day Update.

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

Sister Pat sent a holiday (Saint Patrick's Day is a holiday, right?) message reminding my siblings and I that we are 1/16th Irish.

We are. Honest.

Great-Great-Grandfather Neil McNeil married Sarah Sweeney. Neil was Scottish. Sarah was born in Ireland.

Happy Saint Patrick's Day.

Too cold for Maple Syrup.

Maple sap runs in the trees sometime between February and early May.

The run is not defined by date but by weather.

Days around 50 degrees and nights below freezing pump the sap.

It got close to 50 degrees last week. I am ready for spring so I tapped a couple of maples. I knew it was early but I did not want to miss anything.

I did not.

No sap moving yet.

I will keep you posted on that.

A couple of you sent a link which I have pasted below.

It is a short video. About 3 minutes I think.

Let me know if it raises questions.

I think it is good.

[Local vs. Organic: More Important? | Lexicon of Sustainability | PBS ...](#)

Gail made some super **bison jerky** on Saturday.

I posted it on facebook.

Nothing makes better jerky than bison but that is as it should be.

Bison was the original jerky ingredient.

Link to our Facebook page.

[Snake River Farm Minnesota on Facebook](#)

I have written and emailed to you four short **articles on Animal Welfare.**

I am sensitive to not overloading your inbox with information you do not want. Many of you have sent encouraging feedback, so perhaps I am not overloading you yet.

If you have not received these articles and would like to see them, you can find them on Sarah's Blog, link below.

Sarah's Blog for all recipes, customer letters etc.

www.sandhillfarmsarah.wordpress.com

Sometimes my messages are caught in SPAM filters, especially if you receive email through a company server. Apparently, words describing animals trigger porn filters. What a world.

I will continue the Animal Welfare series as time allows.

I expect there will be around six more and that I will finish before the ice and snow all melts.

I better.

There will be little time for writing once spring really begins.

The animals are doing well and as anxious for spring as I am.

The cattle entertained baby Hazel on Sunday by running and kicking up their hocks.

They like to play as the snow melts back and gives them more space.

On warmer days the bison too, run for joy. They run laps from side to side in their pastures.

It is just delightful to see.

The bison herd is on the south end of the farm this winter so we cannot watch them as closely as in other years.

The neighbors down that way are getting the benefit of the bison entertainment.

I have the herd in a pasture that I intend to improve by interseeding this spring.

I am feeding them on the poorest spots in that pasture.

In that way I can concentrate their manure and wasted hay on the poorest ground. After I interseed that organic material will be of terrific help to the biological life of the soils.

I ordered **baby chicks, turkeys and ducklings** last week.

They should all be here in time for Spring Farm Day, May 17.

I plan to put the buck rabbit with three does next week.

If all goes as intended baby bunnies will be big enough to hold on May 17th.

Gail cooked a pork roast in her **new pressure cooker** recently.

A pressure cooker is a great way to make a wonderful meal with cuts that contain a lot of connective tissue.

Cuts like shoulder and arm roasts are absolutely delicious.

Add potatoes and carrots near the end of the cooking cycle.

The parts we normally discard as gristle become tender, tasty and edible.

The connective tissues add incredible taste to the entire meal.

Find Betty's pressure cooking recipe and other cooking tips on Sarah's blog.

[Betsy's Old Fashioned Pressure Cooker Pot Roast on](#) January 28, 2014

By the way, newer pressure cookers are inexpensive and easy to use.

Some of you have again asked about a source for pasture raised chickens.

At the moment we are considering how to satisfy your need for poultry.

I will send a letter to you next week specifically on that topic.

Most of you have placed your 2014 orders for bison, beef, pork and lamb.

Thank you. That makes it much easier for us to plan.

Best regards.

Tom