

2015 Mid June Update Chickens

From: Tom Barthel <tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2015 12:12 AM

To: Tom Barthel <tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Subject: Mid June Update & Chickens

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

Super weather.

The weather has been as grand as it could be for raising animals on grass.

From bison to ducks.

All are doing well.

We are scheduled for rain again tonight.

That would be just right.

June Harvest is Done.

The June harvest is complete. Your meat is at Quality Meats being processed.

Some of you have already been notified that your order is ready for pick up.

The harvest went exactly as planned.

There is adequate ground beef to fill all orders.

We were also able to harvest three excellent animals for cuts.

As planned, we harvested one bison cow for ground bison.

Unfortunately demand outstripped supply for June ground bison.

That was not a surprise.

You wished a total of 1.5 bison but I cannot harvest ½ of an animal.

All ground bison orders will be filled in the Fall as I will harvest several for ground then.

Delivery Schedule.

I will start metro drop-offs next Friday. I will continue as long as needed.

Drops are in Albertville at the Caribou lot, Maple Grove at the Applebee's lot and Andover at the Grace Lutheran Church lot.

Three, four and five p.m. respectively.

Contact me about delivery help AFTER Nancy calls you to say your order is ready.

Of course, if you can pick up your meat at Quality Meats in Foley, please do so and thank you.

Payment.

I emailed the first invoices on Monday and checks started arriving Wednesday.

Do you know you are incredible in that regard?

I was talking to a farmer Monday who told me he quit selling meat direct to consumers because collections were a problem.

I told him that my customers always pay.

I do not think he believed me.

No one believes how good you are about prompt payment.

Frankly, if it were otherwise, I would not have enough time to care for your animals.

Many of you send beautiful thank you notes with your checks.

I am sorry that I do not have time to acknowledge each note but I enjoy them immensely and share them with Gail.

Tallow & parts.

Remember to talk to Nancy about bones, livers, kidneys, tallow etc.

There should be tallow available.

Beef tallow makes terrific skin balm. Recipes on Sarah's blog.

[The Magic Balm on](#)

Ask Quality to grind the tallow for you. It is easier to render when ground.

Tallow and all these other parts are no charge to you except processing and handling.

Would someone send a good kidney recipe?

I meant to promote kidneys but "no time".

Chicken Update.

We did not process chickens as planned last week.

The chickens are doing fine, but were not yet ready for harvest.

In confinement, on medications and force fed, chickens reach harvest weight in 5 weeks.

Your chickens are raised outside, on grass, without meds and on a special oat wheat diet.

Normally, our white chickens should reach harvest weight in 10 to 12 weeks.

This year, I switched them to whole oats and wheat as opposed to ground oats and wheat.

Whole grains, which are more natural, are better for their digestive organs and probably better for them in other ways.

Unfortunately, life was getting TOO good for the chickens.

On whole grains, the normally big and clumsy white chickens, took to running around, flapping their wings and playing all day.

Good for them, but not so good for the farmer.

They grew slower than expected.

They are now on a diet of 50/50 whole and ground grains.

Still oats and wheat but they can digest this blend more easily, consume more feed each day and grow faster.

I set a next processing date of July

I am confident that many will be ready then.

We will harvest chickens every three weeks from then until all orders are filled.

I am sorry for the delay, but your chickens are enjoying the extra time.

Animal Update.

Overall, the animals are doing wonderfully well.

The cattle and bison are sleek and fattening.

The geese and ducks, who are heavy grazers are growing at a tremendous rate.

Many creatures live on this farm however, so there are setbacks.

One bison calf died two weeks ago.

I have no idea why.

Bison calves are exceedingly hardy.

Sometimes things just die.

The Bronze turkey chicks are doing very well, here and at Sarah's.

Several of the Bourbon Red turkeys have died, however.

We had the same problem with Bourbon chicks last year.

But then, a young bison that I bought last Fall produced a beautiful calf Sunday.

Miraculously, we have lost none of the water fowl and very few chickens.

We still have all 12 geese and 70 ducks.

Those of you who know something about farming know that it is a life of heartbreaks and miracles.

We cannot eliminate the disappointments but I think we can affect the ratio.

Cooking.

Several of you wrote in response to my recent comments about cooking.

Theresa and Deb wrote especially thoughtful letters.

Theresa about good experiences and Deb about bad experiences.

Clearly, I need to write more about cooking your grass-fed meat.

I will.

In the meantime, the internet has tons of pretty good information.

The crucial message is always the same.

Do not overcook.

Do not overheat.

Cook slow and always keep the meat moist.

Best possible regards.

Tom

p.s. Email if you have questions.