

2015 Early August Update

From: SNAKE RIVER FARM
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2015 10:59 PM
To: Tom Barthel <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>
Subject: Early August Update

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

There are many topics in this letter. Sorry that it is lengthy but there is much to communicate.

Harvest starts next week. Many of your beef to be harvested soon.

Waitlists are very likely to be filled. Call Nancy about choices.

Chickens at QM now with more on the way.

Ducks scheduled for harvest August 24, special delivery day August 28.

Geese to be harvested September 28. Special goose delivery day October 3, a Saturday.

Turkeys to be harvested November 18, special delivery day Friday, November 20.

Delivery schedule.

Cooking and letters.

Bison robe for sale.

Our friends and fellow bison farmers, Dave and Sue have a beautiful bison robe for sale. They had it made from one of their bulls but since they have others, it has never been used. Photo attached.

A hide of this size costs almost \$1000 to tan alone.

I know that Sue and Dave will sell it for less than its cost or value.

Contact them directly.

windyridgebison@aol.com

Harvest starts next week. Many of your beef to be harvested soon.

The beef herds are in terrific condition.

I will harvest many in the coming weeks.

Overall, more of your orders will be filled in August and September than in past years.

All or nearly all beef WAITLIST orders will be filled and most of those early.

I will satisfy all who asked for early beef, both for cuts and the roast option.

I will also harvest some of the bison in the next few weeks.

You should have already contacted Nancy at Quality to arrange your processing instructions.

Quality Meats phone # 320 968 7218

Bovine harvest will continue until the first week of December.

Chickens at QM now, more on the way.

There are about 40 chickens in Quality's freezer now.

Next week about 100 more will be processed and ready for pick up.

The final group of 250 will be processed and available October 3rd.

Remember there is a self serve element to our chicken distribution.

You need to contact Nancy and line up your birds when available.

Then, either pick them up, or I can bring them on a normal drop-off run.

There are some Reds in the pipeline but not nearly as many as you requested.

Sorry. Ryan was raising was raising most of the Reds and his flock was wiped out.

We have had some losses too. This week raptors killed three Reds and two turkeys.

Freedom comes with risks.

Ducks scheduled for harvest August 24, special delivery day August 28.

There are currently enough ducks to fill all orders.

You ordered 65 and I believe there are 68 in the pasture.

I do not believe any have been lost to predation.

Not that the eagles are disinterested.

There were three eagles perched above them Sunday morning.

The ducks and geese co-habituate in the same pasture and pond.

I think the ducks are now too big for the eagles.

Geese are territorial and noisy when threatened.

That noise may be the best eagle deterrent.

I harvested one duck this morning that had a defective foot.

My guess is a snapping turtle took a shot at it.

I think that for two reasons.

One, the characteristics of the wound and two, the fact that the duck would not go near the water.

Please try to pick up around that time, or meet me for delivery of your duck on August 28.

Geese to be harvested September 28. Special goose delivery day October 3, a Saturday.

All twelve geese should make it to harvest.

They look perfect.

Noisy, but ideal for geese.

I have arranged for processing on September 28 primarily because it is then that the birds should be at the optimal age and size.

Please try to pick up around that time, or meet me for delivery of your goose on October 3.

Turkeys to be harvested November 18, special delivery day Friday, November 20.

More details as that time gets near.

Fall Delivery schedule.

I will resume weekly delivery runs to the three drop sites of Caribou in Albertville, Applebee's in Maple Grove, and Grace Lutheran Church in Andover.

Either Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

I will continue drop offs until Christmas.

Cooking and letters.

Cooking grass-fed meat is different.

Not necessarily hard, but absolutely different.

This is a big topic among grass beef raisers.

It is estimated that 85% of people get good cooking results and become long time purchasers of grass fed meats.

That means up to 15% do not get it right and switch back to fatty corn fed meat.

My customer records indicate that you do a lot better than average

Nevertheless we do lose at least a few customers each year because the meat cooks "tough".

I know the large majority of you do well with the meat because of the letters I receive and also because of your reorder rate.

My order spreadsheet shows that over 91% of 2014 customers reordered for 2015. That is about 20 points above the "industry" average.

Grass fed ground beef is easiest to cook with good results.

Roasts are next.

Steaks are hardest to get right.

I know that some of you order only ground beef and that some of you are switching to the "roast option" because of cooking issues.

That is fine.

I am pleased we are able to provide a product that works for you.

Actually, although I enjoy a great steak, I am perfectly happy with a delicious grass-fed hamburger.

It is gratifying however, to get letters from you when you do get good results cooking steaks.

I have pasted two such "breakthrough" letters below.

From Marc

I'll take a 1/2 beef

I found especially with the roasts and steaks that the lower the temp the better the meat turns out. The other day I cooked a 3lb roast with only 1/2 cup of water and some salt and pepper and cooked at around 160 for 14 Hours. May not have been necessary to go that long but it turned out amazing. Very juicy and flavorful with a nice crust around it. The juice it left over was a perfect dip for the meat as well. So strange how a little longer at a lower temp can turn that meat into such deliciousness.

The steaks I actually prefer stove top fried in some grass fed Irish butter. Salt and pepper and cook for 3 to 5 min each side. If you go long enough to get it to medium on the stove it will be tougher. Let it stand once you get to med rare or rare and it will set up and be very tender and flavorful. I usually fry some white onions in the left over juice and butter to top it along with a thin slice of Maytag bleu cheese.

From Joy

I have to tell you...you should have every customer buy that Jaccard tenderizer. There were 4 t-bones in our pack. The first two marinated for 24 hrs because I didn't have the Jaccard. They were horribly tough. I won't lie that we were feeling VERY discouraged again with the animal. Tonight we used the Jaccard and the T-bones were amazing!!! We cannot believe it could help as much as it did! Like I said you should recommend to people :-). I got ours on Amazon. Thanks for recommending and quite honestly saving our opinion on this tough animal and our second guessing another big investment on a chance of getting another animal like this one :-) Blessings.

p.s. From Tom

Joy and I disagree somewhat on this particular animal. We did swap some meat back. It was tougher than I wished, but Gail got great results here using both marinate and Jaccard techniques. That is not the point however. The point is that each cook must use cooking methods that work for them. There is some learning involved. This particular animal was larger. Sometimes larger means tougher. It frequently means tastier. Get it right and as Joy wrote, the meat is "amazing".

Some animals are "Tougher" despite our best efforts. I recently read a USDA study that found 5% of cuts from beef grading Choice and Prime was relatively tough. The reasons are not well understood.

Variations happen.

By the way, since Choice and Prime beef both contain very high levels of intramuscular fat.

Corn feeding is required to reach those grades.

High quality grass finished beef typically grades Select.

Select is the grade just below Choice.

I posted an article on training a new mustang recently.

I have attached that article with photo to this letter.

As usual, I have the feeling I am forgetting something, but I will have to get that in a future letter.

Best possible regards.

Tom

