

2015 Early July update

**From:** Tom Barthel <tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 9, 2015 12:07 AM

**To:** Tom Barthel <tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

**Subject:** Early July update

**Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers**

It rained two inches on Sunday.

All together, with Sarah and Jordan's Sand Hill Farm plus Ryan and Ashley's Five Straw Farm we have 300 acres of pasture.

Each inch of rain equals 8.7 million gallons of water. Two inches yields 17.4 million gallons.

Virtually all of that water was captured by the grasslands.

Summer rain is a luxury. Just terrific for the pastures.

**June ground beef went very well.** We harvested 20 beef and 1 bison for you.

I still have a couple delivery runs planned. This week's trip is full but I have space open for Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Nancy, tells me that liver and tallow are all gone

She does have ox-tails, broth bones and kidneys available.

Any of you receiving this letter can have those by paying for the processing only. Generally \$2 per pound.

A great value for grass-fed parts.

Call Nancy at Quality Meats, 320 968 7218.

**Lambs Available for Fall Harvest**

Demand for lambs has been high.

The WAITLIST got so long that Sarah and Jordan decided to expand their grazing flock considerably.

As of now, they have a couple extra lambs for Fall.

Email Sarah at

[skortmansky@gmail.com](mailto:skortmansky@gmail.com)

for grass-fed lamb by the ½.

**The first batch of chickens was harvested last week and then gone in a flash.**

Many of you wanted your chickens early.

We intended to have them available in June. Next year we will do better.

We hit the weight target right on the head, however.

They averaged 5.5 pounds dressed. Precisely as planned.

We will harvest chickens every couple of weeks for the next two months.

All orders should be filled, with the exception that we will not have enough Reds for all orders.

There are about 550 chickens growing here now.

Only about 50 of those are Reds, the majority are Whites.

Ryan and Ashley were raising most of the Reds at their farm but that flock has been wiped out.

The U of M is examining the birds but has not determined an exact cause yet.

Just FYI, it is not Avian Flu nor anything that affects humans.

More than anything it is a big setback for Ryan and Ashley.

The birds were almost ready to harvest.

I apologize to those who ordered Reds and do not get them.

Please switch to Whites if you can.

**Chicken giblets available to all.**

You chicken customers asked that the giblets be packaged and sold separately.

So they were.

These are packaged in one pound packs and priced at \$4 per pound.

All the livers are gone but hearts and gizzards remain.

Call Nancy if you wish to buy some.

**The ducks and geese are doing wonderfully well.**

They have their own pond and pasture.

We started 12 geese and 70 ducks and lost none.

They have proven incredibly easy to raise.

They are ravenous eaters and grow fast.

I think the ducks will be ready to harvest by the end of July, the geese in mid-fall.

Rabbits are coming also, as ordered. Sarah Kucera is raising rabbits for you, as she did last year.

The turkeys are being raised in four groups, in part to protect them from disease and other maladies to which turkeys are prone.

There are three groups here and one at Sand Hill Farm.

So far, we should have enough for all orders.

Turkeys will be harvested in early November, in time for Thanksgiving.

**The beef and bison herds look extremely good.**

Bovines grow and bloom terrifically on terrific grass.

Expect beef  $\frac{1}{4}$ s to be somewhat larger overall.

**The hogs are doing great and happy as pigs can be.**

**Roast beef and burger.**

I have an idea for a new product that might appeal to some of you.

Deb, Theresa and others have written to me about cooking grass-fed meat.

In general, it seems that ground beef is easiest to cook.

The majority of you do roasts quite well.

The biggest challenges arise when cooking steaks.

I am not going to suggest cooking methods here but rather an alternative beef animal that yields only ground meat and roasts.

As you know, we currently offer beef by the  $\frac{1}{4}$  for cuts and beef by the  $\frac{1}{10}$ <sup>th</sup> in ground meat only.

In general the animals selected for cuts are under two years of age and in top condition.

Animals that go for ground meat only are mature, in good health and good condition. Some younger animals do not "finish" well, also end up as ground only.

Would you be interested in a third category of beef animal that might be three or four years old, in excellent finish but processed into roasts and ground meat only?

Because these animals would be over two years old, they would be tastier, less costly and probably less tender.

The ground meat from these animals would be super. Essentially the same as you now get by the  $\frac{1}{10}$ <sup>th</sup>.

The roasts would be delicious and tender when cooked correctly. That means at a low heat for a long time and kept moist.

We could sell such animals by the  $\frac{1}{4}$  or the  $\frac{1}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> because of the simplicity of processing.

I would need to price them higher than the "ground beef only" animals but lower than beef for cuts.

Currently ground beef by the  $\frac{1}{10}$ <sup>th</sup> is \$2.75 per hanging pound. I do not anticipate an increase for 2016.

Beef by the  $\frac{1}{4}$  for cuts is currently \$3.50 per hanging pound but must increase for 2016.

Perhaps the price for roast and ground beef by the  $\frac{1}{4}$  or the  $\frac{1}{8}$  would be \$3.25 in 2016.

Please give me some feedback on this.

Best regards.

Tom

p.s. Email me if you have questions.

