

2015 January Order Solicitation Letter from Snake River Farm

**From:** Tom Barthel

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 6, 2015 8:11 PM

**To:** Tom Barthel (snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com) <snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>

**Subject:** January 2015 Order Solicitation Letter from Snake River Farm

### **Dear Friends and Customers**

In this letter, I will update you on plans for 2015.

Read this letter then please place your 2015 order by email.

Early ordering allows us to plan. It also assures that we will have the meat you wish in the fall.

#### **2014 had its challenges but it was a good year overall.**

We raised 103 beef animals, 18 bison, 120 hogs, 15 lambs plus 600 chickens, 28 turkeys, 60 rabbits and a few ducks for you.

That is about the maximum number of beef, bison, and hogs, we can produce in the humane and natural ways we prefer. Really! I know I have written that before but this time I have to stick to it. The total number of bovines is limited by our pasture. Our pastures get more productive each year, but even so, the number of animals we can graze will grow only slowly. Hogs are limited by the amount of work I can do. We have had four pastures of hogs for the past two years. I do not intend to increase that number. I like pigs, but 120 pigs is enough. Sarah and Jordan will increase the number of lambs, but slowly. We will again raise chickens, turkeys, rabbits, and ducks for you but there also, we must keep the numbers manageable. Some will be raised here at Snake River Farm, some at Sarah and Jordan's Sand Hill Farm and some at Ryan and Ashley's Five Straw Farm.

We have 360 active customer families. Our customers are very loyal but we have room for some new customers each year. As in any business, the best source of new customers is by referral.

Thank you.

Many of you visit the farm and we have gotten to know you personally. We would like to know you all, as well as remember your special needs and preferences.

Sarah has written a message for you concerning lambs. You can find Sarah's message near the end of this letter.

**Email is by far the best way to communicate with me.** Use the [snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com) address. Some of you still use the Clarus Medical eaddress. Within a month or two, that address will become inactive. Clarus is a company that I founded along with a partner in 2000. As many of you know, I retired to full time farming a few years ago. Last fall, I sold my interest to my younger partner. Although the company continues, I am no longer involved.

That affects our telephone number also. We have eliminated the land line to the farm and switched that number to a mobile phone. The phone number to reach us is 763 263 2721. If you have the 612 382 Clarus number in your directory, replace it with the above 763 number. The 612 number will soon be cancelled. Of course, as mentioned above, I am very poor at using a phone. I carry the mobile phone with me when making deliveries but other than that it is best to use the gmail address to reach me.

**2015 Farm Events and Visits. Winter Farm Days are February 21 and March 7.** Both are Saturdays. These dates are later than last year. That is because we have a very full seminar and conference schedule this winter. During the winter, there are many opportunities to learn how to

better care for this land and your animals. There is a wonderful explosion of information on sustainable farming, soil improvement, land management, and animal husbandry. This is a great time to be living close to the earth.

Our **Spring Customer Day is Saturday May 23**, starting at noon. By then we will have lots of baby birds and animals. Bring your family and friends.

The **Fall Customer Day is Saturday September 19**, starting at noon.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. I will email details as these events draw near.

**Natural Variations.** In 2014, the beef animals were larger than in previous years. The hogs were smaller. Some of you have asked why. The simplest answer is, "Because the weather during 2014 was different." That is not the only reason, but it is the major reason.

Rain was good in 2014. Pastures were excellent. The cattle put on relatively more weight.

November was brutally cold. The hogs were comfortable but they spent more time snuggled in their hog piles and less time eating. Much of what they ate went to maintaining body temperature.

Little went to growth.

One of the biggest differences between factory farming and more natural methods is variation in outcome.

Animals that are not medicated or confined, but instead exposed to weather and given choices, vary. They express their individuality. For example, some pigs are playful and energetic. They run and dig endlessly. They tend to be leaner and lighter. Some pigs are relaxed and have insatiable appetites. When not eating, they lie about in great comfort. They tend to be fatter and heavier. Variations like this do not show up in confinement settings. There the animals have no choices in diet and nothing to do but eat.

Some of you are in vegetable CSAs. In a CSA you experience this variation a lot. Some year's asparagus is bountiful. Some years tomatoes are scarce. Variation is natural. Natural is what we strive for.

Thank you for accepting variations.

**Our 2015 prices are as follows, per pound hanging weight.** Beef & bison by the ¼, hogs & lamb by the ½.

Bison \$5.50, Beef \$3.35 until April, then \$3.50, Pork \$2.50, Pork, oat/wheat fed, \$2.75, Lamb \$6.00

**Beef and Bison for Ground Meat Only.** (Per pound hanging weight) Bison \$4.75

Beef \$2.75

We will harvest beef animals for ground meat in June and again in the fall.

We will harvest bison for ground beef in the fall. June ground bison will depend on demand.

Order ground meat by the 1/10<sup>th</sup> animal. That equals 57 pounds hanging and 30 pounds of packaged meat.

**Chickens, turkeys, ducks, and rabbits** are sold dressed, frozen whole. Prices include processing.

Per pound prices are White Cornish chickens \$4, Red Ranger chickens \$4.50, Broad Breasted Bronze and Bourbon Red Turkeys both \$6, White Pekin ducks \$5, rabbits \$7.

Chickens will be harvested starting in June and in general, earlier than last year. Turkeys will be ready shortly before Thanksgiving, ducks in the fall, rabbits as available.

**No deposit is required with your order**, just your honest estimate of what you want.  
**You can change or cancel your order** at any time. You can cancel or change for any reason.  
The most common reason has been job loss or financial set-back. We understand that.

**Harvest Timing and Relative Portion Size.**

Bison and beef by the ¼ will be harvested from August until December.

Hogs will be harvested from October until December.

If you prefer harvest early or late in those periods, or a larger or smaller portion, let me know when you order.

Quality Meats in Foley processes all of our animals.

Bethany and Nick Orton own quality Meats. Nancy answers the phone and helps you with your orders.

We are happy to have Quality Meats as our processor. They work hard to do things the way we, and you, desire.

320 968 7218 [info@qualitymeatsmn.com](mailto:info@qualitymeatsmn.com)

**Sarah's Lamb Letter follows.** "Sand Hill Farm is now accepting orders for fall 2015 lambs. All 2014 lambs were committed to customers by April 2014, please order now if you intend to purchase.

This year we will raise a few more lambs for you, but they are still limited. We ask you only order if you intend to purchase in fall.

The lambs are grassfed, rotating through a series of oak savannah pastures on our 80 acre farm. They will be harvested in late October or early November at 8-10 months of age.

We are offering the lambs for sale at \$6 per pound hanging weight. Lambs are offered by the ½ or whole animal.

We expect the average hanging weight of a whole lamb of 60 pounds (30 per half). A half of lamb cost an average of \$180. This yields about 15-18 lbs of packaged meat, for an estimated cost of \$10-\$12/pound prior to processing.

You will pay an additional processing fee direct to Quality Meats in Foley, same as with any animals you may purchase from Snake River Farm. Processing is typically about \$1/pound, with sausage or other highly processed meats costing more. Ask Quality Meats when you give them processing directions in the fall. As in the past, we will provide you with an informational sheet on processing choices closer to harvest.

We so much enjoy having lambs on the farm, our little Hazel most of all.

Thank you for trusting us to raise food for your family.

Sarah, Jordan, Saul, and Hazel

4746 175 Ave, Becker, MN 55308, 952-358-0235 [skortmansky@gmail.com](mailto:skortmansky@gmail.com)

[www.sandhillfarmsarah.wordpress.com](http://www.sandhillfarmsarah.wordpress.com)"

There is a lot of information in this letter and still, a lot is left out. Please do not hesitate to email when you have questions. [snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com)

Best regards and thank you.

Tom and Gail