

2016 End of November Update

On Nov 30, 2016 9:37 PM, "SNAKE RIVER FARM" <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com> wrote:

Dear Friends, Neighbors, and Customers

We had a week of winter. Now the weather has changed back to late fall.

I prefer that winter stay once it comes.

Things work best when the temperature holds on one side or the other of freezing.

Wet, cold days are hard on animals and old farmers.

I am not complaining really, just saying.

There are 30 hogs here yet. I have them spread out in four pastures, each with its own cozy shed.

I am harvesting 12 each week. The last will be gone in 20 days.

I will almost miss them when they are gone. But, as granddaughter Ella says, "We will get more little ones in the spring."

Hogs can do well in cold weather if they have feed, shelter, and buddies to snuggle up with.

The ground is soft and wet. They are still playing, digging and running.

When it gets close to zero and the soil freezes, they will spend most of their time snug in their beds.

Hogs are sold out, by the way.

I will harvest the last group of beef next week.

Except for six calves, three pregnant heifers due in spring, and a couple misfits. This small herd will stay overwinter.

Balancing at the end is challenging.

Meat for us and for our kids comes from the "odd" amounts that are left over. That gives me some flexibility.

Right now, I have an extra 1/8th for Roast, Stew and Ground, a ¼ or two for cuts or I could fill a few more orders for ground beef by the 1/10th.

Let me know if you are interested.

I will harvest a bison cow next week for ground but that may be all sold. It depends on the exact carcass yield.

There are **about 30 chickens left**. Not at all bad considering you already bought 643 chickens.

There are a few ducks left and possibly a Christmas Goose if the customer does not pick it up soon.

Plenty of rabbits available. I have a dozen more to harvest here.

Normally, I harvest our turkey dinner on Thanksgiving morning.

This year we had a "Blemished" 25 pound turkey after processing. Not bad, just a small area of darkened meat. I did not think it was good enough to sell. We kept the Blem for ourselves.

Gail used the brining instructions that I sent to you before Thanksgiving.

The turkey was the most tender, moist and tasty we have ever had and we have always had great turkeys.

Gail is going to brine chickens in the future.

Brine your pastured turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens.

We had six inches of snow on the ground on Thanksgiving.

We all went on a mustang drawn ride around the neighborhood and the farm.

I have attached two photos. One of us on the wagon. The second of the horses, Blue and Hombre immediately after the ride.

Son-in-law Timothy took the photos.

You can easily see the hot mist rising off the horses.

They are good mustangs. They love to work.

We will use this same young team, among others, for a bobsledding customer day in February. Snow permitting.

There is on turkey hanging around the farm.

The day I took them to the processor, one was badly mauled by coyotes.

The turkey was unable to walk.

I intended to put it out of its misery but Gail decided to put it in the hen house.

She fed and watered the crippled turkey every day.

I figured it was a waste of time but there is no point in arguing with Gail about such things.

It took a few weeks but the bird is now fully recovered.

A big bronze Tom, strutting about the farm as if it owns the place.

Any one need a Christmas turkey?

I got a complaint about meat recently.

I bought some back and we tested it here.

The meat was as perfect as it could be.

Gail served it guests who said it was wonderfully delicious.

It is always a touchy situation when I get a meat complaint.

I want to be fair and not assume the cook is at fault, but that is virtually always the case.

Pastured meat, from bison to chickens is DIFFERENT than commercial meat.

It has less fat and that fat melts at a lower temperature. (The fat is also full of good nutrients. You should eat it.)

You **MUST** thaw it completely without heating. **NEVER THAW** in the **MICROWAVE**.

Cook it at a low temperature so the heat can move slowly into the meat.

Keep it moist at all times.

Water is often added to commercial meat. I did not sell you any extra water.

When served the red meat should be pink inside.

Well done is well overdone.

Absolutely use a thermometer, at least a few times until you get it right.

Thermometers are cheap compared to ruined meat.

Weekly drop off trips will continue until Christmas.

My load is especially light for this Friday.

Let me know immediately if your meat is ready if you wish to have it on this load.

I get lots of delightful feedback from you.

I have pasted some of those comments below.

Tips and Testimonials from you.

Sunai wrote, “We made **Liver & Onions** tonight, so so good and tender, ones we just picked up last Friday, was absolutely delicious!! Also chicken is super too! Thank you :)

Elisa wrote, “Been meaning to thank you for the **ground pork**. I made sausage patties with sage, rosemary, salt, pepper, and maybe garlic powder. Just the smell of even the raw meat was soooo good. Brought me back to my childhood in Switzerland, going to the Butcher shop. The patties were amazing and all my 4 boys loved them, especially the little guy in the photo. :)”

Sheila wrote, “I am allergic to nuts. This year I swapped the pecan portion of my cranberry dish with **cracklings!** DELISH!”

DaleAnn wrote, “We love the ground pork - I make **my own seasoning for breakfast sausage** and either make in to patties or just crumbles and add to egg scrambles or quiche. I also use it for meatballs and in homemade egg rolls!”

Jim sent a beautiful photo of **Corn Squash stuffed with Sausage and Ground Bison**. Unfortunately I am not adept enough to get the photo to fit into this letter. Imagine it.

Sherry M, customer and world traveler, send the following link about **Lard’s renewed popularity in Germany**. In my own German travels I found lard served in a small bowl adjacent to a butter bowl in many restaurants.

<http://www.mintel.com/blog/food-market-news/lards-popularity-spreads-in-germany>

Sherry B wrote, “Just have to tell you that I made a **tri-meatloaf with pork, bison and beef** using a bunch of diced peppers from my garden. It was absolutely delicious!

Mark wrote the following. “By the way, we’ve had some ground and a roast already. Was absolutely fabulous.

I took an **arm roast, seasoned it up the night before, slow cooked it on the grill at 225’** for I think it was 4 or 5 hours. I always use a meat thermometer that stays in while I cook. Pulled it off at 132’, let it rest for about 20 minutes. The temp went to 138’. It was still toward the rare side. Using the low temp, the roast was very evenly cooked all the way through. It was only well done on the outside 1/8” sliced as thin as I could for French dips.

Here’s the great part, the Au Jus. I took 4 soup bones, roasted in the oven for 2 hours at 350’. Put em in a pot with onion, carrot, celery, fresh garlic, bay leaf, salt & pepper to taste a small bit of soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce & 2 cups of water. I let this simmer for I think 5-6 hours. Strained everything to just the liquid and reduced the liquid in a sauce pan till it was a bit thicker. (no flour, no corn starch) Everyone agreed this was the best Au Jus they’d ever had.

We had our neighbor over who is nearly a pro at smoking meats, has won a few big rib contests & is very critical of grilled foods.

He couldn’t believe how good the bison was and was also impressed by the sauce. I assured him the meat (and bones) was due to the fine job you all do at raising your livestock.

New pork customer, Gail G, wrote, “we had our first treat of pig last night. The ham was over the top wonderful. Dave said he hadn’t had ham that had texture and great flavor since he was a kid...yup that would be over 50 years in the waiting.”

Thank you for the many kind notes and cards you include with your payments.

I share them with Gail.

You make the work I love even more enjoyable.

Best possible regards.

Tom

p.s. It has been a good year.