

2016 May Update

On Mon, May 16, 2016 at 9:59 PM, SNAKE RIVER FARM <[Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com](mailto:Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com)> wrote:

**Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers**

This letter will be brief. The days are long and there is much to do.

There are several important points in this letter.

Please take the time to read it, especially if you have meat ordered from the June harvest.

**Next Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> is Spring Farm Day. 1 p.m. until 5 p.m.**

The weather should be super.

All the little creatures are here.

Another new calf yesterday.

The pig had her piglets a few days ago.

Eleven living and doing very well.

I posted a photo and short article on Facebook and I have pasted it at the end of this letter.

**June harvest schedule**

A number of you are out of meat, especially ground beef so we will start the harvest next week. About two weeks earlier than usual.

You have ordered so much for summer that we will harvest eight a week for four weeks and finish near the end of June.

In general your meat will be ready about ten days after I email your invoice.

Nancy at QM will call you when it is ready.

**If you ordered ¼ beef for cuts, you will need to call Nancy** and give her cutting instructions. I will send the guide sheet for that to you in a day or two.

The first chickens should be ready for pick up at QM near the end of June.

You should be able to pick up your meat and your chickens on the same trip if you wish.

Freezer space is not as tight as in the Fall.

**I will make weekly drop off trips to the metro** as in past years.

I will start as soon as demand is high enough for a load and continue for five or six weeks until all of you who wish drop off, have it.

Bethany and Nick, the owners of Quality Meats have a funeral to attend Saturday so they cannot be here. Josh the butcher will be here. Bethany says she will send wieners and summer sausage with Josh.

**If you want some of your meat made into wieners and sausages.**

Remember to call Nancy if you want some of your meat made into wieners, sausage or other products.

QM does a great job on those.

**Ground bison.**

I had planned to harvest two bison for ground meat but so many more of you have asked that I am considering a third bison for ground.

Unfortunately, I did not keep a list of those of you who asked for ground bison in June and were told by me that you would have to wait until Fall.

So, if you know you are on the list for June ground bison, fine.

If however, you asked for June ground bison and I said you would have to wait until Fall, please get back to me.

If enough do, I will add an animal.

**Compost.**

I refill the pile near the end of the driveway every several days.

I will continue to do so for another week or two.

It is delightful to see so many of you using the compost to improve your gardens.  
You can pick up compost on Farm Day, if you wish.

**Farm Update.**

This has been as good a spring as I can remember. And I can remember a lot of springs.  
The cool and wet is great for pastures, particularly those pastures we interseeded within the past year.  
I started the cattle herd on a pasture rotation schedule today. That is at least two weeks ahead of normal.

The cattle and bison have been enjoying good grass in their winter pastures for several weeks.  
They are already getting sleek and fat.

The chicks, ducklings, bunnies and pigs are doing great.

The goslings have been delayed but should arrive Wednesday.

The growing season is off to an excellent start.

Looking forward to seeing many of you Saturday.

Best regards.

Tom

p.s. Email if you have questions.

Sow with eleven live piglets.



This young sow produced eleven live piglets today. (May 13, 2016)

We bought 120 piglets two weeks ago. Those pigs were weaned before we brought them home.

It is always fun to have a sow with little pigs on the farm. Gail searched the Internet and found a bred gilt for sale.

A gilt is a young female pig. A gilt becomes a sow when it gives birth.

We (especially Gail) have been watching the expectant mom closely so we could help when she farrowed. (Farrowing is the act of giving birth to piglets.) Gail checked on the gilt late last night. The pig was in labor and had one live piglet. Gail spent most of the night watching and assisting. It took the sow about six hours to eject all her litter. The last one was full size and perfectly formed but still-born. That is not unusual. The whole process probably just took too long for that one.

Normally, a farmer can save one or two pigs per litter by being there to help. Sometimes you can save a newborn from being crushed. Sometimes you can clean tissue so the piglet can breathe. I have saved some by squeezing their chest to initiate breathing.

Gail saved a couple last night.

This gilt is mostly Red Wattle although she does not look it. She was mated to a full Red Wattle boar, yet the pigs show few Red Wattle markings. That leads me to assume the Red Wattle characteristics of solid red color and wattles are recessive traits that are only common in purebreds.

The sow is good natured and a fine mother. They have their own shed and pasture.

She and this fine litter will be fun to have around. Tom