

## **Early June Update**

### **Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers**

The June harvest for ground beef will take place during the week of the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Last Friday, I met with Bethany, Nick and Nancy of Quality Meats to clarify details.

I intend to send an update solely on that subject in a day or two. That message will go only to the 70 of you who have ordered ground beef in June.

This message is a general update.

I realize this weather is not ideal for many of you but it is wonderful if you are a grass farmer.

The herds are simply blooming with all the spring grass.

Saturday we moved the bison herd across the Township road to the summer pastures.

Gail posted a short video of that move on Face Book, Snake River Farm Minnesota.

It is apparently well liked as she has about 1600 "reach" so far.

Some of the viewers are commenting (guessing) on the exact number of calves as the herd runs by. Six calves actually.

Here is how to count them.

Keep in mind that bison calves can run as fast as adults. They would have to.

Being last when chased by a pack of wolves would be no good.

Also, the calves tend to run inside of the herd and of course near their mothers.

In the video, as the herd approaches, one calf is prominent near the front.

At about second three, a second calf is briefly visible near the front and to the left of the first calf.

That second calf is running almost under its mother's belly.

There are not a lot of safe places to be in a buffalo stampede, but that would be a good one.

At second seven, three more calves are clearly visible in the center of the herd.

The sixth and last calf is visible at second eight, running between its mother and Bill, the bull.

Yearlings and two year olds, bring up the rear.

One more cow is near calving and an eighth is likely.

We have nine bison cows total.

Gail also posted a video of new bunnies which were born a week ago.

We kept two does over the winter. About six weeks ago, I drove to Litchfield to buy a buck.

That seems to be working out just as Nature intended.

Both does have a nest of six or more.

Rabbits are born blind and hairless.

In the video, it can be seen that these are working through those shortcomings.

The Red Wattle pig had her litter this morning.

Several days ago I put a bale of straw in her house so she could build a nest.

Sows do that and it would have been my clue that she was close to farrowing.

This was her first litter and poor gilt started out the day quite confused about what was going on.

Gail and I spent the morning caring for her and a batch of chilly, hungry newborns.

By midmorning, with the help of the Foley veterinarian, she was producing milk.

About eight hours after giving birth, she realized she needed a nest, so she made it then.

She is rapidly learning how to be a good mother.

As of dark, she and eight baby pigs are doing well.

The piglets all have wattles.

We will get some photos on Face book for you.

All the other pigs are now in their summer pastures.

It is a joy to watch them. They play from morning until dark.

There are 93 pigs here (not counting Red Wattle and her brood).

Thirty one in each of three pastures.

One of those three groups is on the new wheat and oats diet.

The other two groups are on the special corn and oat diet we have used for many years.

Ryan is raising a few for us at his farm.

The cattle herds are doing fabulously on the new grass.

There are about thirty here on this farm, almost the same number of beautiful beef animals grazing at Sand Hill Farm and later this week there will be twelve grazing in Ryan and Ashley's pastures.

Just FYI, we increased the numbers of beef and hogs over last year but are around 90% sold out of beef, bison and pork.

Lambs, raised by Sarah, Jordan, Saul and Hazel at their Sand Hill Farm are sold out and wait listed.

I will get the promised ground beef letter out soon.

If you have any questions, about anything we do here, please ask.

Best regards.

Tom