

2023 Early November Update.

Dear Friends and Customers

We have enjoyed some delightful Fall weather.

The Fall leaves have been especially beautiful. Just amazingly colorful.

We got plenty of rain in recent weeks. It would have been better to get some of that water during the growing season. But it does assure that our pastures and savannas will survive the winter well.

The Fall Harvest is now 70% complete. But the end will string out pretty late. That is primarily to give younger animals time to grow and fatten.

There are only about 16 beef yet to harvest. The last will go on December 12th.

About six bison. They will finish just after Thanksgiving.

Over 40 hogs. Half will be harvested in November, more in December but the last few will go January 2nd.

All 40 lambs will be harvested in mid-January.

We will continue metro drop-off trips as long as necessary.

You can still order ground beef and there is at least one lamb left to sell.

Hogs have been oversold for a while.

There is ¼ of beef left plus ground beef as I mentioned above.

There may be a small amount of ground bison available, but we need to wait for the smoke to clear to know for certain.

The Jopp kids sold all their chickens and turkeys.

This 2023 Farm year had some big challenges for us, but it will wrap as a good year.

Juan and Janelle have done a grand job of learning and doing. Today, among many other chores they focused on winterizing pig shelters.

Some of the butcher hogs will be here until January. They need a warm shed.

Also, we are, for the first time in decades, keeping a small pig breeding herd. Last year's sow, four of her daughters and a fine young boar. The boar is a purebred Hereford.

Our new Farmers convinced us to farrow (birth) some of the little pigs we need each spring. As you may recall, it has become harder and harder to find the healthy young piglets that we need each spring.

There are just not enough small farmers in existence. We will see how that works financially and otherwise with an eye to expanding.

The new Credit Card payment system has worked quite well. Many of you have commented positively about it. Easy CC payment has several advantages on our end also.

I posted an article on our FACEBOOK page about art objects that our Native American friends have made with skulls, bones and hides which we have supplied.

Many of you do not do FACEBOOK, neither do I actually. So, I attached it to this letter.

Thank you all for being the wonderful customers that you are.

Have a great Thanksgiving with your families.

Best possible regards.

Tom

p.s. Email me if you have questions.

Quality Meats website link [Quality meats](#) (to leave processing instructions.)

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Native American Art and Ceremonial Objects.

We harvest 15 to 18 bison each year. There isn't really a market for the non-meat parts of bison. Occasionally a customer will ask for a hide or a skull. We of course give these to customers at no charge. If no one is ready to take these bison parts on the day of harvest, we bring the fresh, hide-on skulls home to age.

We place them under a 60-foot-high raptor perch in the center of an open pasture. After 2 to 3 years of predation by everything from eagles to coyotes to mice, plus the effects of weathering, the skulls are clean and bleached.

Hides will rot quickly if not salted and scrapped, or frozen. They have no commercial value. So, if no one takes the hides on the day of harvest, they are sent to a rendering company along with guts and other offal.

For many years we have given unclaimed hides and skulls to Native Americans when they asked. Over the years these extras have gone primarily to Minnesota Ojibway and Sioux. Some pieces have gone to more distant states.

We did not think much of it in the first years. It simply felt like a good thing to do.

In recent years a Native American women named Sandy has become our primary tribal contact. She is essentially our "distributor" of skulls, hides, jawbones, horn shells hoof shells and other bones to Minnesota tribal members. Our relationship with Sandy is very helpful to all parties.

About a year ago Sandy asked if she could bring several Tribal Elders from a northern reservation to thank us personally. That visit was very touching.

Several weeks ago, Sandy brought two young men to thank us. They were fine and sincere young men, in their mid-twenties. One gave us a small wooden turtle that he had carved and painted.

I am an old man, and hard to impress. I was impressed by these men.

Our friend Sandy sent photos of some of the skulls and pieces after they were converted into art and ceremonial objects.

The first was originally a bison cow skull. Red with a hand.





Bison yearling, red and white with feathers.



Longhorn cow skull, blue and green.



Weathered bison skull, white and green.



Domestic cow skull, stained, with bullet hole.

We pasture harvest over 100 domestic cattle and bison each year. That eliminates the stress of handling and hauling. Cattle are most often shot between the eyes as this animal was.

When bison are relaxed, they stand sideways to us and ignore us. That makes a neck shot at the base of the skull the best possible shot. In both cases, death is instant. A shot to a bison skull is a poor choice.



Domestic cow skull. This cow was “polled” (hornless by breeding).



Three skulls on a blue quilt.



This is a working frame of a common design for tanning. It can take a year of labor to produce a well-tanned and worked hair-on hide. This particular hide came from a strikingly black bison heifer.



Bison jawbone war club.



Ceremonial hatchet of ancient bison vertebra.



Ceremonial rattle of bison neck bones.



Ceremonial hatchets of bison *Antiquus* vertebrae.



Weathered bison calf skull.