

Dear Friends and Customers

As of this date, January 10th, it is shaping up to be a good Minnesota winter.

Last year we again sold everything we raised and of course that was good in a number of ways. A few of you waited too late to order and were disappointed. Sorry about that. This year we will add a few more animals but with that I think we are at the maximum for our land, the animal's welfare and my time.

Many of you visit the farm one or more times each year. We like that. Some of you find it hard to work into your schedules. To make that easier and to just have more fun in general we are adding a Spring Customer day. That should improve the likelihood that you can visit us at least once each year. Of course you are welcome to bring your families and friends to see the animals and visit the farm anytime we are home.

Please send me your email address if you have one. That way I can keep you informed of special events and offers. I won't abuse it and of course I don't share your information with anyone.

The Spring and Fall Open Farm Days are Saturdays, May 22nd and September 25th. Mark the dates.

We'll have horses hitched for wagon and cart rides. You, your family and friends are invited. It is totally informal and relaxed. No selling. Just a nice day in the country. You don't need to be a customer to attend.

2010 Harvest Plans and Your Order. There is no deposit required and you can change your order anytime so talk it over with your family and place your 2010 order now. Just give us your best estimate of what you will want and if you need to cancel or change for any reason that is fine. Just let me know of a cancelation before I harvest your animal.

The hogs are harvested in late November but they are normally all sold months before. Beef and bison don't sell out quite so early but they do sell out.

My point is order soon. It doesn't cost you anything, you can change if you wish and it helps me plan the year. I dropped the ball on one order last fall so I will be trying to do a better job of order confirmation this year. You can help me by sending your order via email and checking the confirmation that I will send back.

The timing of the harvest or when do you get your meat?

We get our little pigs in April at about 3 weeks of age and five pounds. Those hogs have a great summer and fall growing in their pastures and are ready to harvest in November. We can't really change that timing. Beef animals are all harvested between September and December. Again we can't change that seasonality. The animals that were yearling in the spring reach the right size and weight by fall. In addition, experts tell us that the meat is highest in nutrients and flavor if the animals are harvested off of late summer and fall grasses. Bison are a little more flexible because we keep a complete herd of all ages and sizes year round. Although I prefer to harvest most of the bison in the same September to December time period I can almost always find animals in the herd that are ready for harvest at other times.

Some of you have asked for your bison or beef earlier or later in the fall. Some of you who order ½ each year would like ¼ early (September) and the 2nd ¼ late (December). Some of you want ¼ from a smaller or larger animal. I am happy to accommodate such requests but you need to let me know of your preferences. Otherwise I simply fill orders in the sequence that the orders were placed.

Bison

We will be harvesting about an equal number of heifers and bulls again this year.

It has been well established in numerous taste tests that people cannot tell the difference between bison meat from heifers or bulls. It matters more that the animals are relatively young and in good condition.

Bison bulls are larger than heifers of the same age.

Generally the heifers will be between 100 and 125 pounds per quarter and the bulls will be 120 to 160 pounds per quarter. The difference to you will only be in size. If you prefer a heavier or lighter quarter, please let me know. Otherwise you will just get bull or heifer as your name comes up on the list.

Beef

The beef we harvest in fall 2010 fall will be mostly heifers and mostly Red and Black Angus. They are all beef type animals selected to grow and finish well on grass. In fact the Red Angus breed is becoming popular for grass farming because the animals grow and finish especially well on a grass only diet.

The following applies to both Beef and Bison.

All quarters are similar. The butcher shop mixes fronts and backs to give everyone a variety of cuts.

You tell Quality Meats how to cut and package your meat.

You should pay us for the hanging weight before you pick up your meat.

You pay Quality Meats for the processing when you pick up your meat. About 60 cents per pound.

The folks at the butcher shop are very easy to get along with. Ask for Beth or Nancy. If you are a new customer I tell them so and they will be particularly helpful.

Hogs

Because they are outside and get a lot of exercise, the hogs grow slowly and stay lean.

Because they get a varied and natural diet their meat is exceptionally tasty and high in good nutrients.

By harvest in November the hogs average 350 pounds live weight. The average hanging weight is 125 pounds per half but they range from 100 to 150 pounds. I mention that because I can set you up for a larger or smaller ½ if you let me know.

The hogs are taken to Quality Meats in Foley for processing. You specify how you want the meat processed.

The folks there can do anything you like including sausages, brats, hams and bacon. The bacon is terrific.

I can pick up your processed meat, bison, beef or pork and deliver it to your home if you wish. No charge.

A quarter of bison or beef or a half hog will fit easily in a small chest freezer. About 3 cubic feet.

Prices

Bison price is \$3.25 per pound, hanging weight. You specify and pay processing of around 60 cents per pound.

Beef price is \$2.10 per pound, hanging weight. You specify and pay processing of around 60 cents per pound.

Pork price is \$1.50 per pound, hanging weight, plus processing. Processing charges vary a lot on hogs, because many of our customers have Quality Meats make specialty products and even have other meats added for sausages etc. The pork is incredibly good and it is lean.

Free Stuff for Our Customers.

As a customer you can also take advantage of the following at no cost;

1. **Farm Tours** and horse drawn wagon or bobsled rides for your family and friends. Prearranged of course. Animals, one-room school house, farm museum, nature, camp sites, woods, stream and prairie.
2. **Skulls, hides** and other parts picked up on the day of harvest. You just need to be there and be the first to ask.
3. **Compost** available spring and fall. You can easily fill a few pails or I can dump a loader scoop into your pick-up or trailer. (We loaded over 40 pick-up and trailer loads this past spring.)
4. **Pure lard** from hog back-fat. Folks who make their own bread, pies or cookies say it gives better results than store bought lard.
5. **Cracklings**. If you have to ask you probably don't want any. Some people use it instead of butter.
6. **Edible liver**, packaged and frozen.
7. **No charge meat delivery** to mutually convenient site and time.

Email works best. tbarthel@clarus-medical.com Or call us at 763 263 2721 and leave a message.

Best Regards, Tom Barthel

