

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

I will cover several topics in this letter as follows.

Thanks for great times on February 9 and 23.

Sarah has setup a Blog.

Training Jake the mustang to harness.

A little more about cooking.

This year I will emphasize ways to more completely use the animals we harvest.

Coming events.

Somebody did ask about renting a pig.

We got close to ten inches of fresh snow Tuesday.

We already had plenty but we'll just melt this new stuff in the spring for ground water.

Until then we'll use it for bobsledding.

I hope the snow is not too troublesome for you.

It is no trouble here.

Spring is coming.

The sun is higher.

The days are longer.

Thanks for great times on February 9 and 23.

The turnout was huge both days.

I believe you all had a good time.

I think we will do more or less the same next winter.

Sarah has setup a Blog.

www.sandhillfarmsarah.wordpress.com

She will use the Blog to post recipes and information.

No doubt there will be other uses also.

To begin, Sarah has posted a comprehensive instruction that you can use to **make your own soap**.

Overtime many cooking recipes, nutritional information and other instructions will be posted there.

As you know last year we setup a face book page which you can reach by Googling, "Snake River Farm Minnesota."

We will use that primarily to post photos.

The third communication medium will be letters and updates like this one that I send to you via email.

Training Jake the mustang to harness.

Last summer, Sarah bought a 13 year old mustang gelding named Jake.

She bought him from a nice lady named Ruthanne. Ruthanne lives on a small farm southwest of the metro.

Jake was born wild, captured by the Bureau of Land Management and initially trained by prisoners in Kansas.

Training by prisoners is a common program. I am told it is good for both the horses and the convicts.

In any case Jake probably got good early training.

Unfortunately, subsequent owners and "trainers" turned him into an unusable horse.

He learned to lose riders by bolting. If that did not work he developed a pretty good bucking routine. Jake was not fit for Ruthanne or anyone else to ride.

We are working on that.

Sarah has been training him since fall.

We took a break in there while she delivered Hazel and I got a shoulder replaced.

Over the past couple of weeks we have gotten him used to the general concepts of harness and driving.

There have been some rough spots as expected.

Training a spoiled horse is terrifically more challenging than training an unspoiled horse.

Actually training an unspoiled horse is no challenge at all.

Sunday we felt good enough about Jake to team him with our senior mustang, Gruella, and do some bobsledding.

It went very well.

A couple photos are posted on the Snake River Farm Minnesota facebook page.

You will get to know Jake at future farm events. He will be a good horse.

We still need to work out his problems with riders but that will come.

A little more about cooking.

I am getting a lot of tips from customers. A few are patched below.

From Laura;

We are enjoying our beef very much. We just had the best Porterhouse steak we've ever eaten. I made sure it was room temp, then pan-fried in a very hot cast-iron skillet, both sides, then turned off the heat and covered it with tinfoil while it rested. It was probably the most tender meat we've had from you.

From Mina;

I have been experimenting with different versions of cooking the meet. I just tried pressure cooking-holy cow! The meet was moist, fantastic, and juicy! Best so far.

From Tammy

Here are a couple of recipes for beef jerky which was perfect for your grass fed beef!

http://www.onetomato-twotomato.com/Main/Blog/Entries/2013/1/18_Grass-Fed_Beef_Jerky.html

From Tom.

Cook for less time and a lower temperature than you think.

Get used to medium rare and pink.

Marinate.

Different cuts require different cooking techniques.

If you let a roast get dry, it is ruined.

Cuts with connective tissue whether steaks or roasts require slow cooking at low heat and must be kept moist.

Some get good results with such meats using a crock pot.

Never cook a precooked ham, warm it.

This year I will emphasize ways to more completely use the animals we harvest.

By encouraging lard rendering and soap making we have been successful in increasing the use of the fat from our animals. Fat that would otherwise be wasted.

This year we will work to increase the use of boney parts of the animals.

Ever try ox-tail soup? I am going to promote it by sending you recipes.
Ever eat marrow from beef bones? Neither have I but we are going to try it and send recipes and nutritional information to you. Grass-fed marrow is very high in some nutrients.
How about using bones for broth? I don't mean soup bones with meat on them but trimmed bones with collagen and marrow.
Soup bones too, of course.
I will be sending recipes to you in coming months getting you ready to use otherwise wasted foods.
The folks at Quality Meats will help by making these parts readily available to you.
Using more of the animal gives you greater value for your money and shows respect to the animals.
We all have a purpose for being. We should fulfill it as completely as possible.

Coming events.

May 18, Saturday, is Spring Farm Day.
Mark it on your calendar.
I will send more information as the time nears.
Baby pigs, calves, lambs, chicks, bunnies.
Little ducks and turkeys.
Wagon and pony rides.
Lots of stuff like that.

Somebody did ask about renting a pig.

Many of you have noticed the sign on the front gate that reads, " We don't rent pigs".
That line is from the movie Lonesome Dove.
Some nice neighbors (Joe and Aletha actually) put it up years ago when Gail and I were on vacation.
We had not given the subject much thought before that time.
It seemed like a reasonable policy so I left the sign there.
Last month a pleasant sounding man called and asked if we had pigs to rent for a church play.
He said he was willing to pay well for the right piglets.
As you can imagine many questions come to mind when someone asks to rent a pig.
Fortunately I had a ready answer.
I was able to tell him, "No, renting pigs is contrary to a long standing and clearly posted policy".
I suppose it might have mattered that we will not have any pigs until April and he needed them right away.
Nevertheless, it felt wonderfully secure and somehow bureaucratic to be able to call on policy for a final decision.
Best regards
Tom