

SNAKE RIVER FARM

BISON, CATTLE, HOGS and damn fine HORSES

Tom Barthel & Gail Wilkinson

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see us on Facebook @ "Snake River Farm Minnesota"

January 2013 Newsletter and Order Solicitation

Dear Friends and Customers

In this letter, I will update you on plans for 2013 and ask you to **place your 2013 orders now**.

Please do us the favor of ordering early. It allows us to plan and assures that we will have the meat you wish.

The demand for grass-fed and humanely raised meat is incredible. We are approaching the maximum number of animals that I can raise and handle. We now have 248 active customer families.

I would like to know you all personally and to some extent remember you orders and special needs.

I am discouraging potential new customers unless they come as referrals from you.

My daughter Sarah and her family will again raise **lambs** for you in 2013. She has written a short explanatory letter for you which I will incorporate in this letter.

Many of you are looking for a good source for chickens. We do not sell **chickens** but our friends at Quality Meats do. You may find that convenient. I will add a paragraph below to explain further.

Prices and Ordering. Our 2013 prices are as follows, per pound hanging weight.

Bison, Beef, Pork and Lamb for cuts. Bison \$5.00. Beef \$3.00. Pork \$2.10 Lamb \$5.00

Please order beef and bison in increments of ¼, hogs and lamb by the ½.

Beef and Bison for Ground Meat Only. Bison \$4.50 Beef \$2.50

Last year you purchased ten beef animals and two bison for ground meat.

Obviously the demand is strong so we will repeat that offering again this year.

We will harvest beef animals for ground meat in mid-June and again in the fall.

We will harvest at least one bison for ground beef in the late fall.

You can order for ground meat by the 1/10th animal which equals about 55 pounds hanging and 30 pounds of packaged meat.

You can order any number of 1/10th portions. I will send further announcements and more details in time.

No deposit is required with your order, just your honest estimate of what you want. You can change or cancel your order at any time before harvest. Sooner is better for us. It gives us time to make schedule changes. You can cancel or change for any reason. The most common reason for order changes in recent years has been job loss or financial set-back. We understand that.

Harvest Timing and Relative Portion Size.

I have expanded the harvest schedule somewhat to better accommodate you and the work load.

Bison and beef will be harvested from early September until early December.

Hogs will be harvested in October and the second half of November.

Lambs will be harvested in mid November.

If you have a preference for **early or late** in those time frames let me know.

If you prefer a relatively **larger or smaller** animal, I can probably accommodate that also.

This is a Small Family Farm

As most of you know, my daughter Sarah, her husband Jordan son Saul and baby daughter Hazel built their home on 80 acres nearby. They call their farm **Sand Hill Farm**. Some of your beef animals are grazed there.

All of the sheep are raised by them on their **Sand Hill Farm**.

Ryan and Ashley Straw, their sons, Hunter and Colton and daughter Savanna graze some beef animals for you also. Ryan also raises a small herd of your hogs.

That gives us about 300 acres of grazing land to work with.

All the bison, most of the beef animals and the great majority of the hogs are raised here at Snake River Farm.

More on Prices. As always, I am concerned that our prices might get too high for you. At the same time we cannot stay in business if we do not make a profit. Each year I take steps to decrease our cost of production. That has helped hold down price increases even though animal and feed costs have risen dramatically in recent years. Bison, beef and lamb prices are unchanged from 2012. I have increased our pork price from \$2.00 to \$2.10 to help offset the effects of an 18% increase in feed cost since early 2012.

Note from Sarah and Sand Hill Farm about Lambs

Sand Hill Farm will offer lambs for harvest in fall 2013. 2012 was our first year raising lambs. We've learned a lot, and were able to provide several families with enough lamb for some tasty, special meals.

This year we will increase our flock to satisfy more of your requests. We will do our best to meet all requests, but our flock size will be somewhat limited as we are still developing quality pastures at our farm.

Our grassfed lambs are lean and delicious. Just a few nights ago we served a simple lamb meatloaf to friends and family. It was moist and flavorful, no ketchup required.

This year's price will remain \$5 per pound hanging weight. Lambs are offered by the ½ animal. You will pay processing direct to Quality Meats, as with animals you purchased from Snake River Farm.

Last year's lambs had an average hanging weight of 40 pounds (20 per half). A half of lamb cost an average of \$100. This yields about 10-11 lbs of packaged meat, for an estimated cost of \$10/pound prior to processing.

One of our goals is to grow somewhat larger grassfed animals for you this year. As we have not done it yet, we cannot guarantee larger animals, only that it is a goal.

Of course we communicate almost daily with Tom and Gail, but for recording keeping purposes it's helpful if you communicate directly with us regarding lamb.

Thank you,

Sarah, Jordan, Saul and Baby Hazel

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About Chickens from Quality Meats

Each year many of you ask about chickens. We do not sell chickens but Quality Meats in Foley does. Quality Meats offers whole, 4 pound, medication free, frozen chickens. I mention that as a courtesy to you and to our friends at Quality Meats. We are not involved so communicate directly with Nancy at Quality Meats in Foley.

320 968 7218 info@qualitymeatsmn.com

2013 Farm Events and Visits

Lard rendering Days are **February 9 and 23**, both Saturdays from noon until dark. We will render your pork fat into lard, Sarah will demonstrate soap making with beef tallow; the mustangs will be hitched for bobsledding.

Our Spring Customer Day is **Saturday May 18** from noon until sundown. Bring your family and friends.

The Fall Customer Day is **Saturday September 21**, from noon to sundown.

We will have horses hitched for wagon and cart rides. You, your family and friends are invited. All events are informal and relaxed. No selling. Just a nice day in the country. All events are "rain or shine". Bring your family and friends. Dress for the weather

Of course, you are welcome to bring your families and friends to see the animals and visit the farm anytime we are home.

I will email detailed notices to you for events as they come up.

We have a Face Book page "Snake River Farm Minnesota". There are photos there.

If you have questions please email me. Email works best for me.

snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com

Best regards and thank you.

Tom Barthel