

2014 Mid November Update

From: Tom Barthel

Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2014 6:24 PM

To: Tom Barthel (snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com) <snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>

Subject: Mid-November, 2014 Update,

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

I suppose this could be titled an Early Winter Update.

We got a foot of snow. Most of you got less, some more.

It is snowing gently today.

I mentioned to Gail that it was beautiful, like being inside a Snow Globe.

She pointed out that her ideal of "Snow Globe beautiful" was not four degrees below zero.

Deer harvest has been low for a number of reasons.

Because of that Quality Meats was **able to resume processing our hogs a week early.**

That is good because the cold has made it challenging to keep them in water.

I had planned for something closer to normal weather.

At 4 below, hoses and valves freeze quickly.

The pigs are not going thirsty but watering them is challenging.

They occupy four pastures in groups of around 20.

The hogs are comfortable outside during the day, as long as they have water and unlimited feed.

Each pasture has a fine shed with a dirt floor.

To be warm at night, the pigs produce a bowl shaped dugout about three feet deep.

They then fill that bowl in a "hog pile".

I give them plenty of straw each afternoon to line their bowl.

The mixture of straw and sand is amazingly dry and warm.

There are still 70 hogs to harvest so the last of them will be around well into December.

NOTE: Nancy tells me that some of you have not given her your processing orders.

Please do so ASAP.

This is a super busy time at Quality Meats.

It is a hassle for Nancy to have to chase folks down to get orders.

Here is a link to use

[Tom's Pork Processing Choices Fall 2014 on August 3, 2014](#)

The turkeys and the last chickens were processed on Wednesday.

Good timing for them.

The Bourbon Reds turkeys had taken to roosting high in the oak tree over their coup.

That had to be getting cold.

Turkeys do not walk well in deep snow either.

We are short on turkeys to fill orders. Predator dogs killed many of Ryan's about a month ago.

Predators are always a great risk for poultry that are not closely confined.

We have more than enough chickens to fill all orders.

This last group of chickens are Red Rangers from Ryan. Average weight, 5.25 pounds.

There are about 25 beef yet to harvest.

I moved the herd home from the south pastures two weeks ago.

Cattle are comfortable in Minnesota weather as long as they have plenty of good forage to fill their bellies.

Heat is a by-product of rumination.

I will harvest most of those animals in the next three weeks including some for ground beef near the end of the month.

Many of you have ground beef by the 1/10th on order.

I have enough ground beef animals to fill additional orders.

Let me know.

Horses likewise are great cold weather animals.

I hope to have time tomorrow to hitch a team to a bobsled.

We plan to have a couple bobsledding events for you in February.

Think we can count on good snow?

The bison are in a high native grass prairie on the south end of the farm.

They love this weather.

I will harvest five more bison between now and December to fill your orders.

I may have an extra ¼ bison.

I know I have additional 1/10ths of ground bison.

Again, let me know if you are interested.

It will be pretty busy here until Christmas.

Do the best you can with this weather.

Best possible regards.

Tom

p.s. Email if you have questions.