

2014 Mid October Update

From: Tom Barthel
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 8:44 PM
To: Tom Barthel <Snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com>
Subject: Mid-October Update

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

The weather this fall is as delightful as any fall I can remember.
One terrific day after another.
Great days to be working outside.
Fall work is going well. I believe the farm will actually be ready for winter when it arrives.
The animals enjoy this weather immensely.
Nice temperature, not a lot of rain, no bugs.
The hogs especially, play, dig, run and frolic.
No creatures on the farm are more joyful than pigs.
I hope you are able to get out and enjoy these splendid days also.

Harvest is on track.

[Fall 2014 Harvest Schedule](#)

Email if you have questions about your place on the schedule.
This is the first year we supplied chickens, turkeys and rabbits to you.
The last batch of chickens will be harvested in a few weeks.
I expected we would learn a lot about producing and distributing chickens and we did.
In general it went well.
The weights of the finished chickens varied quite a bit from our goal of 5 pounds. Some weighed 3 pounds and some weighed a lot more.
Sorry about that.
More than anything, that is a matter of predicting growth rates and scheduling processing correctly.
Feedback has been good, however.
Dan, a new-this-year-customer, wrote the following;
**"I grilled up one of those chickens last night. The wife claims it was the best chicken she ever had. I'm glad about that because it weighed about 8 pounds and we will probably be eating it for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the next three days.
Have a great day, Dan"**
We will probably raise chickens again next year if you wish. If so we will make corrections and do a better job.

I am making at least one metro delivery trip weekly.

Some weeks Friday, some weeks Saturday, and some weeks both, depending on need.
Friday drop-offs are in the late afternoon, 3 p.m. in Albertville, 4 p.m. in Maple Grove, 5 p.m. in Andover.
Saturday drop-offs are in the morning, 9 a.m. in Albertville, 10 a.m. in Maple Grove, 11 a.m. in Andover.
Email me if you need help **after** Nancy tells you your meat is ready.
I have enough space for a couple more orders for this Friday delivery

Do not send in your 2015 orders yet.

I have not even started a list for 2015.
I will send an announcement and other information in January.
Wait for that. You will not miss out.

Every day, toward sundown, flocks of **sand hill cranes** fly across the farm.
They move from the fields to the south where they spend the day, to the Sherburne Wildlife Refuge to the north where they spend the night.
We love their raspy calls.
The setting sun illuminates their huge wings from beneath.
Each day there are more and more cranes.
Each day they get louder and louder as they prepare for migration.
By late November the ponds and the ground will freeze.
All at once, they will be gone.
The days will be short.
Winter will be here.
This farm, and this farmer will rest.

One other thing.

This spring I completed six years as a director and secretary of the Minnesota Buffalo Association. That is an elected position. I declined nomination for another term. Six years seemed like enough. I wrote about it at the time.
Somewhat to my surprise, the leaders of the Minnesota Association nominated me as a director to the National Bison Association (NBA).
This director position represents Bison growers in the states of Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Substantially to my surprise, I was elected in September.
Not sure what to make of that.
As you know, our bison herd is small.
Other members of the National Board have huge farms or ranches with hundreds and thousands of animals.
Some have large processing and distribution companies.
Ted Turner's ranch manager is on the Board as is his chief veterinarian.
I guess like so many other things in life, this will be a learning experience.
Gail and I are looking forward to the many opportunities for driving trips around the US.
The NBA is headquartered in Denver.
There are state and regional bison associations all across the US and Canada.
Wish me luck.
I expect it will be fun.
Best possible regards.
Tom