

2015 April 23 Update

From: Tom Barthel
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2015 10:24 PM
To: Tom Barthel <tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>
Subject: April 23, Update

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

Grass is growing and that is a very good thing.

The little pigs are doing quite well.

You may recall that we got 150, well 151 actually almost a month ago.

Seventeen went to Ryan and Ashley's, Five Straw Farm.

Two are at Sarah and Jordan's. Those pigs will spend the summer preparing a new garden patch.

Each year Jordan fences a small sod pasture and by fall that ground has been turned a thousand times.

The following spring, that soil is mellow, nutrient rich (think about that) and sod free.

Several more went to other small farmers.

The remaining piglets, about 120, are now divided into four groups, each in their own pasture.

The chickens are doing well.

There are about 160 here in our brooder and the same number at Ryan's.

They grow amazingly fast, especially the white Cornish.

The first group will be ready for harvest in June to coincide with your June ground beef orders.

Each year we harvest more bison than our small cow herd produces.

To supplement our own calf crop, we buy young animals from other farmers.

Last week Gail and I drove to Caledonia to bring home eight calves and yearlings.

Caledonia is in the south eastern corner of Minnesota.

That tip of the state is called the "Drift less Region" because the glaciers that shaped the topography of our state missed it.

It is an ancient area of beautiful hills, bluffs and valleys.

This week we drove to Fairmont, near Iowa to purchase five more.

Those animals give us enough to fill your orders this fall and next.

Our bison cows have produced three healthy, rambunctious calves in the past two weeks.

I posted a photo with text on Facebook. I have attached that article to this letter.

Gail and I spend Friday through Sunday in Rice Lake Wisconsin at the Minnesota Bison Conference.

The conference focused on grass land and savanna resoration.

It was superb.

As always, I learned much. Many of the sessions validated what we do here.

I wrote a short article for the National Bison Association newsletter.

I have attached that also.

Earlier in April, I posted two other photo articles on facebook.

You may be interested in those. One is about an early emerging snapping turtle the other is about trumpeter swans.

Since the posting, two pairs of swans are now nesting in a pond on Sarah and Jordan's Sand Hill Farm.

I wonder how many children are so blessed as Saul and Hazel, to have swans outside their front window?

ORDERS and June Ground Beef

Most of you have placed your 2015 orders. Thank you.

We have some portions yet available.

Ask if you wish to add to or change your order.

We will harvest for ground beef in June as usual.

We can take additional ground beef orders.

There will be lots of broth and marrow bones available.

This year I am going to encourage you to use more livers and kidneys. Give that some thought. Tons of recipes and nutritional information can be found on the Internet.

I will send more details about timing etc. as June gets nearer.

Spring Farm Day is May 23.

Mark the date on your calendar.

The little turkeys, ducks, geese, bunnies and more will be here then.

Details in a couple weeks.

U of M Ag Day.

Tuesday I was at the U of M in front of Northrop Auditorium.

Several of us from the MN Buffalo Association staff an information booth there each spring.

I enjoy going back.

Fifty years ago I attended English lectures in Northrop.

I spent a lot more time in the Physic Laboratory nearby.

Fifty years is most of a lifetime.

It passed with incredible speed.

Today I had a wonderful day interseeding pastures using a 85 year old Van Brunt grain drill.

I have it running beautifully.

I may post a photo if I have time.

The farm days are long now.

Best possible regards.

Tom

p.s. Email if you have a question about your order.

p.p.s. There is a compost pile for you near the end of the driveway.