

## 2015 Mid January Update and Poultry Ordering Details

**From:** Tom Barthel

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 14, 2015 10:20 PM

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

**Subject:** Mid January 2015 Update and Poultry Ordering Details

### **Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers**

It felt a tiny bit like spring this morning.

Not a lot, but a little.

Sunset is noticeably later. I came in at 5 p.m. It was still light out.

The earliest sunset is in the first week of December. After that, sunsets start getting earlier.

The shortest day is around December 21<sup>st</sup>, but even so, sunrise gets later until the first days of January.

The time from the end of November until the beginning of January is when the days feel incredibly short. By now, mid-January, the world is getting brighter.

Spring is really coming.

I spent a few days at the **Minnesota Organic Conference** last week.

I wrote a letter to you last year about the wonderful breakthroughs in soil biology.

That information is now pervasive everywhere.

The information is not actually new. Some farmers and some soil scientists have been practicing and teaching these things for decades.

What is new and terrific, is that this stuff is now accepted and taught at every level.

Current agricultural practices and government crop support programs are far out of step with good soil stewardship.

But the good news is, we know what to do to make things right.

Federal crop support programs do for soils what confinement systems do for animals.

Eventually both will fail.

When that happens we will still have a chance to save our soils and make things right.

If you want to know more, there is a good primer on the link below.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/biology/>

### **Yesterday, Sarah and I had a meeting with the folks from Quality Meats.**

We do that several times a year in one form or another.

Bethany and Nick, the owners were there of course.

Nancy was there. She is the person you speak with the most on the phone. The one who communicates with you about your processing.

Josh who does the primary butchering and Larry the former owner were both there.

Bethany bought the butcher shop from Larry when he retired years ago.

Larry is well past normal retirement age.

Like many of us older guys he likes his work.

Larry still helps Bethany and Nick, putting in long days during busy times.

He brings decades of knowledge and expertise.

At the meeting, we talked for two hours about how to serve you better.

That is a remarkable thing really.

We, as farmers, are uniquely favored to have a meat processor close by that cares so much about our customers.

You are fortunate to have your meat processed by expert butcher that you can meet and know personally.

It is well accepted that the best way to know how your meat is raised is to know your farmer.

On the drive home from Foley, it occurred to me that you can take a big step farther.

You can know your butcher.

I do not know how many families in your neighborhood can say that, but the number is small.

Bethany, Nick and Josh attend the Farm Days.

They bring their kids to enjoy the day just like you but they also come to meet and talk with you and to answer your questions

### **2015 Farm Days.**

**Winter Farm Days are February 21 and March 7.**

Spring Customer Day is Saturday May 23.

Fall Customer Day is Saturday September 19.

Mark these dates on your calendar.

I will email details as these events draw near.

### **I sent the January Order Solicitation letter to you on the 6<sup>th</sup>.**

Already, 92 of you have placed your 2015 orders.

Thank you.

Order lamb directly from Sarah. If perchance you mention it to me in a letter, I will pass your lamb orders on to Sarah.

Because the January 6<sup>th</sup> letter was already lengthy, I left out a lot of details regarding chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese.

To remedy that I have pasted a detailed letter below.

### **About Chickens, Turkeys, Ducks and Rabbits from the Snake River Farm in 2015.**

Last year, 2014, was the first year that we produced these creatures for sale.

We learned a lot. Raising large numbers for sale is much different than raising a few for our families. This year we will do better on timing and better at hitting the target weights, especially for the chickens and turkeys.

Last year these animals were raised on four different farms.

Chickens, turkeys, rabbits and ducks came from Snake River Farm.

Chickens and turkeys came from Five Straw Farm.

Chickens and rabbits came from Wellspring Farms.

Turkeys and rabbits came from Sand Hill Farm.

2015 will be much the same.

All the poultry will be pasture raised.

Turkeys and ducks are best defined as free range.

Chickens will be pastured and on grass but confined for protection from predators.

Rabbits must be penned for their protection but they will have ample space and access to greens.

Poultry will be fed no GMO corn. Grains are necessary but those grains will be primarily non GM wheat and oats.

Small chicks will get the minimum amount of soy bean meal needed to meet their protein requirements for good health.

Breed and Variety Characteristics.

- White Cornish Cross chickens. The majority of the chickens will be White Cornish Cross. These birds are exceptionally meaty. These are the most commonly raised broiler chicken. They will be tender.

- Red Ranger/Freedom Ranger chickens. These birds have been selected for their ability to do well on pasture. They are less meaty but considered by many to be tastier than the Whites. They grow significantly slower and are more costly to raise.
- Broad Breasted Bronze turkeys. These are a colored version of the common white Thanksgiving turkey. Meaty but much more tasty when raised on pasture.
- Bourbon Red turkeys. A heritage breed that forages very well. They are less meaty but more tasteful than the white or bronze turkeys. They grow slowly and are significantly smaller at maturity. In body type, they are most similar to wild turkeys.
- Pekin Ducks. These white ducks are the most popular meat duck.
- Rabbits. Meat rabbits. Mostly New Zealand breeding.

All the poultry will be processed at a state licensed facility. They will be packaged in shrink wrap plastic and frozen whole. Rabbits will be dressed and frozen whole. All are sold by packaged weight.

Prices include processing.

White Chickens,	\$4 per pound.	4 to 7 pounds each
Red Chickens,	\$4.50 per pound.	4 to 7 pounds each
Bronze Turkeys,	\$6 per pound.	14 to 25 pounds each
Bourbon Turkeys,	\$6 per pound.	6 to 12 pounds each
Ducks,	\$5 per pound.	4 to 7 pounds each
Rabbits,	\$7 per pound.	2 to 3 pounds each

The above weights are target weights. We will do our best.

Last year we filled 90% of your orders. All the chicken orders and all the rabbit orders were satisfied.

We fell short on turkeys when one entire flock was destroyed by predators late in the season.

In our part of Minnesota, predators are a great risk to pastured poultry.

We will do our best to protect these birds and provide them for you.

It is also quite possible that orders will exceed our capacity to produce.

If we cannot fill all orders, we will satisfy orders on a first ordered, first filled basis.

Email if you have questions. [snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com)

### **Help us decide how to package giblets.**

Questions on how to package poultry livers, gizzards and hearts came up during our meeting with Quality.

Last year the giblets were packed inside the bird.

We are considering leaving them out and selling them separately.

This is what we are considering.

1. Necks would go inside the bird.
2. Livers, gizzards and hearts would be packaged separately in one pound packages. That means you could buy livers by the pound, gizzards by the pound or hearts by the pound. They would be at the same per pound price as the bird. E.g. \$4 for a pound of chicken gizzards. Because the giblets would no longer go inside the bird, those of you who do not eat them would not be charged for them either.

Would you prefer the above over having them always sold with the bird?

It seems to us it might give you a better chance to make a special dish.

Please give us some guidance by emailing Tom at

[snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com](mailto:snakeriverfarmer@gmail.com)

### **Bone Broth Recipes**

Many of you took broth bones home with your meat orders.

That is great.

Bone broth is especially recommended for people with bone health or bone repair issues.  
Julie K's husband Jeff had a knee replaced this fall.  
Julie prepared a lot of bone broth for Jeff who is recovering quite well.  
Julie sent a recipe.

April also sent bone broth and cold remedy recipes.  
I will add both in a letter to you in a day or two along with a great flank steak recipe from Sarah.  
Best regards.  
Tom