

Early February Update

From: SNAKE RIVER FARM <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 11:36 AM

To: SNAKE RIVER FARM <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Subject: Early February Update

Dear Customers and Friends

The entire month of January felt just like January.

We did not do much outside except haul wood for the woodstove and haul hay for the animals.

In general, animals are comfortable, even in extreme cold if they have plenty to eat and minimal shelter.

The horses, sheep and goats need at least an open to the south shed.

The bison are the only exception. They have no use for shelter. Their wonderful bison coats keep them warm in all weather.

Gail's hens stay within their warmed coop and only venture out on sunny days when the temperature gets above zero.

Quality Meats will be closed from February 4th through the 14th.

I do not believe they have taken a vacation break since before COVID.

Chicken dates. I failed to mention the times when chickens will be available this summer.

Aaron and Emma plan to raise three batches of 100 each. A batch should be processed and ready for you in July, another in August and the third in September.

For each batch, we will pick the frozen birds up Friday and then bring them on a normal Drop-off run.

The stops are Albertville, Maple Grove and Andover.

We can also hold some birds here or at Jopps, but not too many and not for long.

Because storage and logistics is an issue with large numbers of frozen birds, this will be largely a "First come first served" process.

Do not ask us to schedule that now. It is too early.

As the time gets near, I will email those who have ordered chickens and we can make final arrangements.

Thus far, you have ordered 178 of the planned 300 chickens.

That leads right in to my comments about 2022 orders.

This far 248 of you have ordered. That is ahead of the normal rate. That means half of you have ordered.

Thank you for doing so. That makes it much easier to plan our year.

You are ordering somewhat more than normal.

Based on your orders, I have alerted our lamb supplier that we will need more lambs than last year.

The same is true for hogs.

Do not delay too long before you place your order. We will be short or run out of some species.

You can always cancel, no reason required.

February 26th will be Winter Farm Day. From 1 to 5 p.m.

As normal, Gail and her wonderful helpers will deep from snacks in new hog lard. She will move that operation, the food, to the garage from the barn.

We will probably be rendering lard on the big wood stove in the barn.

There will be a campfire, probably plenty of snow and wagon rides to the bison and to the school house.

We will use tractors and wagons instead of horses and sleds. Sorry about that but I do not feel hardy enough for that task. Our replacement teamster, son Timothy is not yet experienced enough.

I will send more details about the Winter Farm Day later.

Notes about bacon from our hogs.

A customer asked about cooking our bacon recently.

The bacon from our pastured pigs is much different than store bacon.

The fat melts at a lower temperature. That is primarily because I feed our hogs a high percentage of oats.

Oats is healthier for the pigs and it produces a higher quality fat.

Because the pigs are pastured and eat a high-quality diet, their fat is nutritious for us.

Because most store bacon is terrible food, cooks have developed the bad habit of cooking bacon until it is crispy. They do that to reduce the unhealthy fat of conventional, corn fed pork.

Cooking bacon from our hogs, until it is **crispy will absolutely ruin it.**

Cook it a lower heat.

Cook it less overall.

Or try cooking at a lowish temperature in the oven on a cookie sheet.

I tell people that they would improve their diet considerably if they ate the bacon and skipped a morning pastry.

I wrote a lengthy "how too", article about savanna and woodland restoration. It is on Facebook.

With 18 photos, is much too large to attach here.

I will attach the introduction text-only to this letter.

I will paste a photo or two below.

Here is a link to the Facebook article if you are interested.

https://www.facebook.com/Snake-River-Farm-Minnesota-128488470549785/?ref=page_internal&path=%2FSnake-River-Farm-Minnesota-128488470549785%2F

I think that is all I intended to write about in this letter.

If you refer a friend or relative, be sure to have them mention your name.

I get a lot of inquiries. If they just ask about prices, I do not normally respond.

Daughter Shannon has been home for a week, supervising work on her log home.

Gail, Shannon and I will drive to Florida for a short, warm break before Winter Farm Day.

All else is good.

Stay warm and healthy.

Tom

p.s. Email if you have questions.

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Snake River Farm Website www.thesnakeriverfarm.com

Snake River Farm Facebook page [here](#).



#1. This photo shows a large white oak. The shape of that tree with large lateral limbs, tells us that it initially grew in an open space. It has been crowded in recent decades by boxelders, black cherries, red oaks and buckthorn brush. I spent a half day cutting small trees and brush from under the white oak canopy, two years previous to this photo. The crowding was then much worse. I do not take enough before and after photos.

There are several red maples in the photo also. We want to liberate the white oak and allow the red maples to grow. The final setting should provide over 50% sunlight to the surface.



#2. This is the same scene, from a slightly different angle, three years later, in the Fall. The maples are in color.
The stump in the right center, is of the red oak that is to the left center in the previous photo.
The White Oak has plenty of space. The soil surface, which was formerly bare of grazable vegetation, has been reseeded and is growing a rich mixture of grasses, legumes and forbs.
The maples have space to grow into good sources of maple syrup